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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[A FRUITLESS APPEAL.]

THE MYSTERY OF HIS LOVE;

OR,

WHO MARRIED THEM?

By the Author of "Christine's Revenge; or, O'Hara's Wife."

CHAPTER V.

ALFRED, LORD ANERLY

Man's love ever changes, his heart ever ranges
From flower to flower like a butterfly;
Woman loves through joy and sorrow,
Yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow,
If a man smile or if he sigh.

Mrs. OWENS paused with her work in her hand and held her head in its large, old-fashioned frilled cap a little on one side, while she listened attentively as if afraid that somebody might overhear what she had to say to the doctor.

"I wouldn't have her know what I know and what I think, not if it was ever so; 'deed to goodness, doctor, but it's my belief, sir, that poor creature is no more married to my lord than I am married to you, sir."

The old lady could hardly have put the case more strongly. The doctor was twenty years younger than Mrs. Owens, besides which, he had a wife and a large family of sons and daughters. He smiled good temperedly:

"Then I'm afraid she has but a small chance, poor little soul. But tell me, what did Lord Anerly say? Is he a scamp, do you think?"

"I think he's like most of the men folk, doctor—excuse my saying so, there might be one here and there like my poor husband or like you, doctor, but, indeed, I think, taking them altogether, the men are a downright bad lot, and when you come to a young, nobleman, handsome and rich, and with all the most beautiful young ladies thinking of him, and trying to win him, it's ridiculous to fancy that he could marry a mere little governess. The countess don't think so much of her as she does of her own maid, Miss Everet. Miss Chantry is pretty, but there's beautiful ladies with fortunes and old family names trying for my lord, and he's like his father before him. The Anerlys were always rakes, sir, always. Why when the present earl was young no girl could pass through the park when he was about but what he would be after her talking nonsense to her; he has talked nonsense to me, who am older than him a good seven years. Ay, but he was a rake, and this young fellow when he went away was eighteen years old, but he was always about with his gun, or scouring the country on the wildest horses in the stables. He got nearly drowned once fording the river, and—"

"Tut!" interrupted the doctor; "a madcap, but no vice, not a whit, at eighteen."

"Ay, but he's been with the officers, who are such a lazy, good-for-nothing lot. They think no more of blighting a poor young girl's life and breaking her heart than they do of shooting a rabbit in a wood; it's all sport to them, doctor."

"But what did he say? Are we never to come to that?" The doctor spoke impatiently.

"Well, sir, I said to him—my Lord Anerly, your lady is very, very ill, I don't think she will live, your lordship. If you don't come up to my place and see her—"

"What the deuce—" began he.

"And then he stopped and looked hard at me in the faint light. The moon was getting up above the trees and just then the wind arose and cried through the wood below like a human soul in pain.

"Oh, my lord, I said—and of course I dropped a humble curtsy—'Oh, my lord, I said, 'do have pity on her. I almost think she won't get over it, I do, indeed.'"

"Will you walk in there?" says he, speaking as stern and cold as a judge who is going to put on the black cap.

"And he draws a key from his pocket and opens the French window of his own room, and points with his finger for me to go in first, then he follows me, and lights the gas. He locks the glass door and draws the great velvet curtains close, so that nobody standing outside can see us, then he drops into a chair, and I, standing opposite him, see how pale he is with anger or sorrow—which I could not say, but he's that handsome, Doctor Phillips, that I don't wonder at his turning any girl's head. I should not like to trust one of my own daughters if he tried to make a fool of her, and that's the truth."

All the daughters of good Mrs. Owen were married save the two at home at the farm, and both of those were years older than Lord Anerly—stout, plain, honest, rough women. So the doctor said, hastily:

"No fear for them. Now tell me, what did this handsome live lord say for himself?"

"Says he:

"Are you Mrs. Owens, of the farm Glan something or other?"

"Glanvallon, my lord," says I.

"Ah," says he; "well," says he, "so a young person is ill up there at your house. I have heard all about it."

"Your wife, my lord," says I.

"Then he smiles a little.

"What an extraordinary tale to tell," says he, "she must be out of her wits, poor thing."

"My lord," says I, "don't trifle, for indeed, indeed, my lord, it's life and death to her, poor thing. She will run mad and do some dreadful thing which will get into all the papers and get you talked of, my lord. If you don't act the gentleman by her, my lord, she'll drown herself or cut her poor young beautiful throat, or something if you don't look out, and then her blood will be upon your head, my lord," and I burst out crying and sobbing.

"I never see any face work as his did. He looked as if he was about to faint; he got up and went to a black carved sideboard and took out a bottle of brandy and a long green cut glass, and he nearly filled it with brandy and drank it all off, then he comes and stands by me and looks at me bold and straight with his handsome black eyes.

"Mrs. Owens," says he, "I don't mean to be bullied"—that was the ugly word he used, sir—"bullied," says he, "by you or any woman. Heaven knows I wish Miss Chantry well; but her tale is most absurd, most absurd. I refuse to have anything to do with it."

"Then you mean you are not her husband, my lord?"

"If I were," says he, "I should have to quit Penrythan before to-morrow. The earl would leave away every penny from me. The countess, as Miss Chantry knows, is only my stepmother, a stepmother can't be expected to act like a real mother to a young man. If the earl disinherited me, perhaps Lady Penrythan might pretend to be sorry, but it would not be true. She could make the earl leave all his lands to those two girls of hers, for the lands are not entailed. I suppose Miss Chantry has a spite against me, and wants to ruin me. Much good will that do her. Your sex are spiteful, madame. Ha, ha, ha!" adds he, with a laugh, as cold and cruel as the north-east wind when it comes with threatenings of snow down the mountain sides. And he takes to striding up and down the room, looking like a prince in a play as I saw once when I went to London forty years ago, he was so tall and dark, and wonderful handsome.

"My lord," I says, "I think the poor thing has acted very foolishly in telling your secret, and so perhaps it would be wiser to hide it from your stepmother, and the earl and you may rely on me," I said, whereat he laughed his proud, scornful laugh; but I went on talking all the same. "So let us say nothing about her being your wife, my lord, only come and see her, if it's only for one half an hour, just to put comfort into her poor heart and let her know that you love her still, my lord, and the poor, dear, helpless little one, the sweetest little baby girl, my lord, I ever saw in all my life, and I have seen a many."

"No doubt," says he, in his scornful tones; "but I hate babies, madame, always did from a lad. It's natural to me, Mrs. Owens," he says, "to hate babies, and I don't believe I have the honour to be the papa of the little atom of feminine idiocy you have now in your house. As for Miss Chantry," here he turns and looks me full in the face, "as for Miss Chantry," says he, "tell her that Lord Anerly sends his compliments to her, and begs to tell her that she is the greatest fool he ever met with in his life."

"The fellow is a brute!" roared out the good doctor, in a burst of honest rage. "A scamp!" The worthy doctor's voice was hoarse with wrath. "Oh, if she were my daughter, Mrs. Owens, his being a lord should not save him, for I would thrash him to within an inch

of his life, the coward! And did he refuse to come and see her?"

"Yes, sir," he said:

"I don't want to see your patient," Mrs. Owens; the best thing a young fellow can do under such circumstances as these is to keep out of the way of an excitable woman like this who can't hold her tongue."

"And you won't come and see her, my lord?" I said.

"No," says he, with an ugly oath, "I won't; I'll send her a banknote by post when I can, for the earl and the stepdame are not generous, but a Lord Anerly is not at the beck of every trumpery girl he has been civil to when he was idle and bored in country quarters. No, I won't come, and if she molests me, comes here or anything of that sort, I shall let the law take its course—tell her so. Now, before you go, take a glass of wine, for you look fagged to death, and you'll faint before you get home. After all," says he, while he was pouring out rich port wine into a large glass, "after all, Mrs. Owens, I am not quite a villain at heart, and I will say this, I honour you for being kind to—any poor woman in distress; so accept my thanks, and don't talk about my having her blood on my hand, I can't bear that. Drink that wine and I'll send her the banknote soon."

"My lord, have you really no other message for her, except that she is a fool," said I, beginning to sip the wine, for I did feel upset with this scene.

"No, Mrs. Owens," says he, sitting down in a velvet chair, and covering his eyes with his hands, "no, upon my soul, I have nothing else to say to her. She must forget me, she must; there is no help whatever for it. We may give her two or three hundred pounds and marry her to some poor worthy curate."

"The man is an earl's son," said the doctor, scornfully, "but he must have a vulgar soul."

"Well, sir, I soon came away after that, and he has never been here nor sent the banknote that he spoke of, and there's grand doings at the Castle; a ball and supper is to be given to all the tenants next Monday to celebrate the return of Lord Anerly, and I hear there's dinners and dances or private theatricals every night, and he pays the utmost attention to Lady Grace Biddulph, and she has been mad in love with him ever since she was fourteen. She's twenty-four now and plain, but lady-like; very meek-hearted and rich. Ah, it's her money he's after."

"But it's preposterous," said the doctor; "this poor creature mentions the church and the clergyman who married her at the said church; and there must be the register; that ought to be seen to at once. I think I'll write and ask the vicar."

And then the good doctor paused and remembered the delicate wife and seven children who were dependent on him for bread, and he admitted to himself that it would be a dreadful thing to mix himself up in the affairs of these great folks, and have an earl, a countess, and a Lord Anerly for his enemies, and his children's enemies after him, for the Penrythan family was a proud and fiery and vindictive family.

"No, when she is better she must get those proofs herself," said the doctor, to himself. "If they exist at all they won't hurt by keeping a few weeks longer. I am afraid that they do not exist though save in the bewildered brain of the poor, beautiful young creature upstairs. May Heaven have pity upon her."

Soon after this the good doctor took his departure from the farm of Glanvallon.

Another three days are past. It is Monday, the tenth of December, 18—. This is the day when the ball and supper is to be given to the tenants at Penrythan Castle. Cooking has been going on for two days in the great kitchens; the cakes and jellies and pastry and creams are all spread out in the housekeeper's rooms. It is one rule of the countess that her little daughters are never to eat pastry.

"It is bad," she says, "for their complexion."

So it comes to pass in the natural order of

things that their little ladyships are quite inordinately fond of pie-crusts. Lady Anna, the leading spirit, the rebel with the fiery self-will of the fiery Penrythans in her veins, is quite determined that Lady Bertha and herself shall each have a large, round, yellow-lemon cheese-cake apiece.

This species of dainty was ever much coveted by the Ladies Anna and Bertha, aged nine and eleven. Lady Anna, as we just now said, had all the indomitable self will of the Penrythans. She had made up her mind to gain possession of the cheesecakes, and she set her wits briskly to work to achieve this desirable end. The little ladies had no governess since the abrupt departure of Edith, consequently they had much time on their hands.

With regard to Lady Anna, it was quite correct to assert that the lines of Doctor Watts, relative to the mischief which a certain dark monarch finds always to employ "idle hands" were pregnant with truth and meaning.

It was about two o'clock of the sombre, leaden December day; all the servants were at dinner in their own quarters. Ladies Anna and Bertha were supposed to be reading some proper kind of story-books in the schoolroom. In reality they were in the housekeeper's room helping themselves to the cheesecake. While they were eating them fast and frantically they heard two voices in the next room. One was that of the housekeeper, the other was that of Brice.

"Listen," said Lady Anna, holding up her forefinger, "they are talking secrets about Miss Chantry. You know they told us she was gone to London to nurse her sick brother. You know she said she was an orphan, without sister or brother. Listen!"

The two children continued to eat cheesecake, and listened.

"Well, Miss Anna, I can't help thinking there's something in it," said the voice of the housekeeper. "I never will believe Miss Chantry was a light-minded or a light-behaved young person."

"She's got a lady's air now," responded Brice, "up at Glanvallon."

"Then she must have believed herself married!"

"Riddlesticks!" said Miss Brice.

"You were always too hard on her, Brice," said the housekeeper.

"I never did like her, ma'am, and that's the truth," said Brice, "and you know I suppose she lays claim to be Lord Anerly's wife? Ha! ha! His lordship is too sensible a nobleman for such goings on as that. I wonder what she will say when she hears the wedding-day is fixed for him and Lady Grace Biddulph, not that he cares anything for her. It's only her fortune he is marrying."

By this time the young ladies had each eaten a large cheesecake apiece. Lady Anna held up her finger to her chubby sister.

"Come," she whispered, "before they find us. I want to speak to you."

So they stole back to the schoolroom. There Lady Anna knelt down before the fire on the hearthrug, and throwing up her pretty white hands above her pretty golden head, she exclaimed:

"How wicked grown up people are; to think of their all telling us Miss Chantry was in London when she's at Glanvallon, and has got a baby. We must go and see it and nurse it. We love babies. I suppose she's the mother of it?"

"Yes, I daresay she bought it in Penrythan," responded little Lady Bertha, gravely.

"Then we'll go and see it," said Lady Anna. "You and I, and we'll tell her about Alfred's party, and about his going to be married. Brice said something about Miss Chantry, being Alfred's wife."

"No, she didn't," responded Bertha. "She said she didn't like her."

"You little simpleton. She said also, that she called herself Alfred's wife, but that's a falsehood of Brice's because she's never seen him. Now, let us ask our mother to let us have a ride with Roberts, and then we'll go to Glanvallon and see our dear Miss Chantry and the

baby she has bought, and we'll tell her about Alfred's party and about his going to marry Grace, because Grace told us that herself, and said we should be little bridesmaids, and have real gold lockets and chains. Come along."

A large square room, with a wide window seat painted white. The window looks only upon the bare, rough hill of Glanvallon, rising straight before the house at that side, and seeming to meet the leaden-coloured heaven at the summit.

The floor of the room is bare, but so clean and white that it almost would seem a pity to cover it with a carpet. There is a large tent bedstead—an old-fashioned, but comfortable affair, with snowy, dainty curtains. A large fire roars up the wide chimney; a large rug of crimson wool is spread in front of the fender. In a low rocking chair, close to the fire, sits a young and lovely woman.

She wears a long dressing-robe of violet-coloured flannel, fastened down with bows of violet satin ribbon. Her dark hair is wound simply round her head; she sits and sews diligently; she is employed in making a baby's white cashmere dress, with the word "Lillian" in violet silk under a broad frill of the material at the bottom of the tiny skirt.

In a poor old battered cradle lies a child, sleeping on a soft white pillow—a tiny infant, three weeks old. At last Edith puts down her work and looks at her child.

"How lovely and peaceful she is; how I wish my Alfred could see his child! Strange he never comes near me, but of course that cruel step-mother keeps him in ignorance. He does not know that I am here. I will read his last dear letter again; I have worn it next my heart until it is almost in rags."

She took from her breast a letter worn and torn; she kissed it passionately, opened it, and read aloud to herself. There was nobody but the baby to hear the following letter.

CHAPTER VI.

LADIES ANNA AND BERTHA.

Yet I pine in my grave—
By the sad sea-wave,
Come again, bright days,
Oh, boys and pleasure gone!
Come again, bright days, come again,
To the old days of youth and love.

MONTREAL, July 11th.

"MY OWN BELOVED,—

"The mail is just starting, so excuse haste; I will write a longer letter next time, but this is only to assure you that I am alive and well, for I know what a nervous, anxious, imaginative, self-tormenting being is my sweetest wife. Whisper it low, my own darling, that holy word, wife. Nobody must guess just yet at our sweet secret. I have a hard, relentless judge in my step-mother. She thinks of her own gains. Her constant object is to secure larger and still larger settlements on those little feminine representatives of hers. She is fifteen years younger than the earl, and young for her years, beautiful too, with a well-preserved beauty, but her heart is of stone.

"My father's health is failing, his mental grasp is not what it was. She has unbounded influence over him. If he found out now that we were married, she would make him turn me a beggar on the world—a titled beggar, with my captain's pay. The very lands he could leave away from me if he chose, so we must hide our secret a little while longer. When I come home at Christmas—I am to have sick leave then, for I have not been well of late—I shall induce my father to settle on me Newlands Park in Surrey; it's worth four thousand a year. When that is secured to us, we need not fear if we are found out. Anyhow this miserable time of parting will be over.

"We shall be together, dear love, even if our marriage be only suspected by the world. I will never part from you when once we meet again, my Edith. I shall sell out of the army and we will go abroad to Italy or Switzerland,

and live on the four thousand a year from Newlands Park. I send you twenty pounds by this mail; I am in debt. I have sown all my wild oats, Edith, sown them all, and reaped a not very pleasant harvest, but now, please heaven, I will only plant such good seeds as shall bring forth good fruit, which shall grow in the paradise—that happy garden of our domestic love, and of our home. You fret too much about what you tell me.

"Get away before the time; go to London and take rooms at nineteen, Gloucester Place, Portman Square. I know the people there; call yourself Mrs. Alfred Vincent. You know I am Alfred Vincent Anerly; I will send you one hundred pounds before the time, but I shall, I believe, be in England before our child is born—Heaven grant I may. Now, my love, Heaven bless you; this is a stupid letter, but it assures you of my love. Oh, how I long to see you again, and clasp you in my arms; you are more to me than my life.

"Believe me, my wife, ever your own,
ALFRED V. ANERLY."

Again and again Edith read this letter. Its words were engraven on her impassioned heart. Surely they testified to a husband's love, to a desire for her comfort, to a longing desire to clasp her to his breast? But, alas! she had received that letter in July and here was December, and Alfred had never once written to her since, though she had written so many times to him.

He had sent her no money, so that she had been obliged to advertise for a situation. She had been to the Governess's Institution in Harley Street, and had there been most strangely put into communication with the Countess of Penrythan, the step-mother of Lord Anerly, and she had been engaged as English governess to the ladies Bertha and Anna, at a salary of sixty pounds a year, and now Alfred had come back to that noble, ancestral home, of which he had spoken so much to her, and it seemed almost, that he had changed towards her.

"If it is so," said Edith, folding up the letter and replacing it next her heart—"if it is so, the cruel countess has intercepted our letters; it is mysterious though, because she hates Alfred, and would belikely to wish to set the earl against him by telling of the marriage." And then a hot, painful blush dyed the face and fair throat of the young wife.

"Yes, she had been the traitress—she. Pride—her selfish pride had made her betray the secret which she had promised to conceal. She had told the countess everything—told her even of the church, its situation, and the very name of the clergyman who had made her Lady Anerly.

"That is the reason," said Edith, bursting into tears; "when he came home that first night, she must have taxed him with it, and he is furious with me. Alfred is passionate, I know, for I have seen him in a passion, but he has never been in a rage with me until now in his life."

And then she burst into more furious weeping. Suddenly she heard voices on the clean, carpetless stairs, voices that she knew. Another moment and the door was burst open, and little Ladies Anna and Bertha rushed into the room in their little riding skirts and round hats, the very same stylish garb that these small aristocrats assumed in Rotten Row. The pretty children sprang first to Edith and half smothered her with kisses, next they went to the shabby cradle, and Anna was about to take out the baby, when Edith cried:

"No, dear Anna, don't wake her, darling!"

But the baby, startled by the boisterous little dames, awoke and began to cry, so Edith took it out and the children enjoyed the supreme felicity of seeing it fed with the bottle. While this process was going on, Lady Anna took the opportunity of informing Edith that she and Bertha were only under the guardianship of a young groom called Miles, that they had totally disregarded his remonstrances, and left their ponies grazing on the hillside outside the farm gate.

"I don't care a snap for Miles; not liking it, and thinking he and we as well shall get into a scrape. Miles is only a boy and a coward. I suppose he is afraid of Alfred. We don't like Alfred much, Miss Chantry; we haven't seen him for two years. When he was in Paris he was merrier and made us laugh, now he's a sulky creature."

"And do tell us where you bought the baby?" put in little Bertha, "because we should like to get one—Anna and I; we hate dolls."

"Yes," said Lady Anna, "I was saying to Bertha some people think me too big for a doll. I don't see why we shouldn't buy a live baby."

"You would get tired of it, dear," said Edith, laughing a little.

"Oh, Miss Chantry," cried Lady Anna, "is it true you said you were Alfred's wife and met him in Cumberland?" Then without waiting for an answer: "But of course you never did say such a thing, because he is going to marry Grace Biddulph, and we like her; she's rather ugly, but she's nice, and we are to be bridesmaids, as two, and have real gold lockets and necklets, and wear pink satin dresses. Grace told me so herself."

"Not pink satin," said Lady Bertha, "blue satin. Anna never remembers things rightly."

"Then we are going to have a party to-night, Miss Chantry," continued Lady Anna. "All the tenants are to come—Mrs. Owens and her daughters. Won't it be fun to see some of the people dance?"

"Yes, mamma says if Anna is rude she shall send her away."

"If Anna is rude?" cried her little ladyship. "How silly you are, Bertha."

"Anna is always a little rude. Miss Chantry, dear, won't you come to Alfred's ball?"

Edith was white as death. The news about the approaching marriage seemed indeed to her but a hideous mockery, an impossible and monstrous dream. Still there was a method in the madness of it. She seemed totally and completely ignored by all these persons, as if that marriage in the lovely moorland church had never been, as if that letter which now rested hot against her beating heart had never been written.

A wild doubt of her own existence, of the reality of anything, made her brain whirl for a moment, and only the presence of the little ones, who came in their innocence and kindness to tell her this awful news, prevented her from tearing her hair and beating her breast.

"It is false!—it is a falsehood!—it is a mistake!" she said to herself. "He may be afraid of the anger of his father, he may want to punish me for a time for my impatience and selfishness in telling Lady Penrythan that we were married, but he cannot mean to carry on the farce to the point of proposing marriage to Lady Grace when he can't marry her."

At this juncture the door opened, and good Mrs. Owens came in in a huge bustle.

"Dear heart alive, my ladies," she said, curtsying deeply, "who would think to find my poor place honoured by a visit. Dear sweets, how lovely they are; like twin roses."

And so they were, these little half sisters of Lord Anerly, the loveliest children in the country side.

"Yes," said brisk Lady Anna, "I am very pretty, I can see it in the glass. And so is Miss Chantry; her hair and eyes are magnificent. I always fancy that beautiful Elfrida, who stabbed the Saxon king in the back, is like her. We have a painting of her in the Picture Gallery."

Edith, who was trembling from head to foot, broke into an unearthly laugh, which made the lively child start.

"And you think then that I have the look of a murderer? Oh, no, strange if I—I should ever do anything so dreadful. A knife, and to plunge it up to the hilt in the false—false heart of a lost love!"

And Edith went off into violent hysterics. Anna, full of curiosity, loving to pry into everything that did not concern her, little warm-hearted self, remained, and gave what aid she could, but soon Mrs. Owens' daughters came

and hurried away the earl's children to their ponies and the care of their groom.

When Edith was a little recovered, she was laid on her bed with her baby by her side, and she fell into an uneasy slumber, which lasted some hours.

When Edith awoke, the clock in the kitchen below was striking. She sat up in bed and listened, counted the strokes to the number of nine, and then, passing her hand over her brow, she asked herself what new weight of grief this was which now pressed like lead upon her heart? What news had she heard? Stay! Ah! it was the children's tale which had struck like a lightning shaft upon her soul, made her brain reel, and the grim phantom of very madness cast its ugly shadow before her path.

"A marriage?" she asked herself. "Did not those children say the very day was fixed. They were to be tiny bridesmaids, and wear blue satin and gold lockets. What can the farce mean? He must wish to make the earl and countess believe that he is not my husband, and so he will carry on this deception perhaps to the buying of the ring and the making of the cake, and then—will he come to me and ask me to go abroad with him? Perhaps he wants Newlands Park settled on him first. But what horrible deceit! How unlike his noble heart! How mysterious it all is. One thing is certain, if it costs me my life I must see him. Yes, see him to-night—this night while the house is filled with music and feasting at the tenants' ball."

Edith got out of bed, struck a light, and proceeded to dress herself as warmly as she could, for the night was bitterly cold. Raising the window-blind she saw the ground white with a deep fall of snow. All the hill side was covered, but none fell just then; the winds were shrill; the moon was sailing high amid moving masses of black cloud; the wind screamed shrill from the wide chimney of the old farmhouse.

Edith looked at her gold watch which lay on the table. She saw that it was a quarter past ten; she put her chain round her neck, then went and looked at her sleeping child.

"I will not take her with me," she said, to herself. "The cold night air might kill her. I will go now."

She extinguished the light, and stole downstairs. She wore a large jacket of rabbits fur, and on her head a soft, warm hood of crimson wool, lined with silk of the same tint; the hood was shaped like a Marie Stuart cap; there was a narrow, ancient, black-framed mirror against the wall in a corner of the staircase; the moonlight came through the stair window, and showed her the reflection of her own beautiful face in the looking-glass. She shuddered, and could have shrieked, for it seemed to her that a dark figure of a tall woman was behind her in the glass menacing her with hideous gestures of mockery. Doubtless this was but the reflection of a grotesquely shaped cloud, but Edith turned, quite expecting to see some human form on the stairs behind her.

There was nothing of the kind, only the empty staircase, carpetless, clean and white. She hurried down into the stone-flagged passage. Everybody was in bed. The house was silent; the two Miss Owens were in fact at the ball; the good old widow slept in her own room above that of Edith. Her sailor son and two farm-labourers slept in two rooms over the great kitchen, which was apart from this portion of the house, so that Edith reached the little parlour—the best room of the establishment—without being seen or heard.

This best room had a carpet, horse-hair furniture, white curtains, and a French window. To unbar the shutters, unlock the window, and pass out, was only the work of a few minutes for Edith, and now she is walking over the snow by the fitful glimpses of the moon, having left the farm and the farmyard behind her. Ten minutes' brisk walking—for her energetic will and excited spirit made her despise the weakness of the body—ten minutes' brisk walking

brought her to a certain side entrance of Penrythan Park.

There was an iron gate, rusty through disuse, leading into a neglected avenue, with moss grown path and trees whose wild, luxuriant boughs formed in summer-time an archway overhead.

Edith knew the spot; the secluded avenue had been a favourite haunt of hers on sultry Sunday afternoons, when her pupils had been with their parents; here, with or without a book, she had walked and dreamed of Alfred far away over the seas, and prayed to heaven to send him back to her.

And now he has come. Yes, he has come, and she is far more wretched than she had been during that sunny August which now seemed years ago to her.

Edith knew how to get in through a gap between the stone wall of the park and a hedge of willows, which there made a fence, for the wall did not entirely surround Penrythan Park. Soon she has passed this avenue, her feet are soaked through from walking on thick, half-melted snow. She is now in sight of the house—the grand, gloomy Castle of Penrythan—one of the wonders of North Wales.

There were lights, bright lights, in most of the windows. The house dated from the time of the Edwards, but the whole of the front had been renewed in the days of Queen Anne. An imposing structure with two towers and a large front pierced with many windows, some large, some small.

A great flight of marble steps led up to the entrance door, and the large carved portico which Edith had seen in her dream. Skirting the shrubbery by a wide path which ran outside it, fenced from the park by an iron rail, Edith soon stood close in front of the house to which her husband was the heir. She did not mount the steps as she had done in her dream. She went to the side, where was a door that she knew of leading down a narrow corridor to the entrance-hall.

Edith went on and tried this door. To her amazement it yielded to her touch. By some oversight in the hurry and bustle of the entertainment, the servants had left it unlocked. Another moment and Edith was in the corridor hastening towards the light at the end—yes, she heard the clang of a brass band and the sound of the dancers' feet. Another moment and she stands in a recess by the doorway and watches the gay assemblage dancing in the hall.

She looks for Alfred, but does not see him. She feels giddy, faint, dying; she clutches the air and would have fallen, but that a strong man's arms have caught her. He bears her, half fainting, into an ante-room. Close by a dim lamp with a shade stands on a side table. The strong arms lay her on a couch. Is this death, this deadly faintness? And whose—whose are these arms that encircle her? A servant's voice in the doorway calls:

"My lord, the countess asks for you."

Then life rushes back to the faint heart. She winds her arms about my lord, and though there is still the mist as of death between her eyes and his, she cries aloud:

"Alfred! Alfred! I am Edith, your wife!"

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

For the last fifty years, a record of hailstorms in Wurtemberg has been kept at Stuttgart, the capital. From a study of these observations it appears that there is a decided difference between forests of beech and forests of pine, in the liability to be visited by all. The former suffer greatly, the latter hardly at all.

An attack upon the accuracy of American explorers has been made by the Rev. S. J. Whitmee, a well-known missionary to Polynesia. There is a small island north of Samoa, called

Quiros, or Gente Hermosa. Mr. Whitmee visited it in 1870, and found its whole diameter to be about four miles. The interior, however, was occupied by a deep fresh water lagoon some three miles across. The report of the Wilkes expedition described the island as being without a lagoon. Such an error, especially on the part of scientific explorers, is justly condemned as inexcusable; but may not the true explanation be that some convulsion of nature has formed a lagoon there which did not exist at the time of Captain Wilkes' voyage, a quarter of a century earlier than the visit of Mr. Whitmee?

MR. J. NORMAN LOCKYER's theory that the so-called elementary substances of chemistry are in reality compound bodies is based upon the results of his researches with the spectroscope, and particularly his spectroscopic study of the sun and stars. It is interesting to know that purely chemical investigation points to the same conclusion. In the new treatise on chemistry by Professors Roscoe and Schorlemmer, of Owens College, Manchester, now in process of publication, the following statement appears: "So far as our chemical knowledge enables us to judge, we may assume, with a considerable degree of probability, that by the application of more powerful means than at present are known, chemists will succeed in obtaining still more simple products than the so-called elements."

ONE of the most noteworthy scientific papers published in a long time is an article by Francis Galton on what he calls psychometric facts. It describes an investigation of the operations of the author's own mind by two interesting experimental processes. In the first, he endeavoured to note the different ideas suggested by the various objects successively perceived during a brief walk along a London street, taking special care to dismiss each idea as soon as possible in order that a new one might follow. In the second experiment, Mr. Galton displayed to his own view, in succession, seventy-five words, and recorded two distinct ideas associated with each, noting the time required for their formation. This trial was made four times. It is not possible to give the results in detail, but some of the general conclusions may be instructive. The tendency of the same idea to recur again and again was very marked, and the habit of reiterating thoughts is probably commoner than is usually conceded. Then it appears that a large proportion—possibly half—of the ideas of after life are associated with the experiences or thoughts of youth: a fact which, as Mr. Galton well says, points to the importance of an early education which shall store the mind with varied imagery. His most surprising suggestion is, however, that the best brain-work is probably done without consciousness of any thinking at all.

MR. H. N. MOSLEY, the naturalist of the Challenger expedition, in his recently published notes of the voyage, gives an interesting account of a parrot on board the ship. The parrot heard a great deal of talk about the soundings constantly going on, and probably something also about the principal theories in regard to ocean depths and currents; and he had learned to say: "What! two thousand fathoms and no bottom! Oh, Dr. Carpenter, F.R.S." This remark seems to have been greatly enjoyed by the ship's company.

THE relative value of the various antiseptics in their relation to medicine and surgery is the subject proposed by the Medical Society for essays in competition for its Fothergillian Medal. The topic thus presented is very important and the medical profession would confer a great benefit upon the public by an authoritative expression of opinion thereon.

A TUNBRIDGE WELLS JURY.—The verdict of the coroner's inquest on the death of a child was, "The child was suffocated, but there is no evidence to show that the suffocation was before or after death."



[A VISIT OF CONDOLENCE.]

FRANK BERTRAM'S WIFE;

OR,

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"That Young Person," "Why She Forsook Him," "Strong Temptation," &c., &c."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FRANK.

We watched her breathing through the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

HOOD.

Too late Charles Stuart's carriage stopped. A crowd collected.

"Stay with Muriel, Frank," spoke the author, hurriedly; "I must get out. A woman has been run over!"

He sprang out and rushed to the spot where Tom Gibbs stood, bending over a white, unconscious figure. The late stage doorkeeper of the New Theatre turned quickly round, so that he concealed his helpless charge from Mr. Stuart. Tom knew Beatrice's one wish was to meet no one she had known in other days, and he was faithful to that wish.

"Who is it, Gibbs?" asked the author, hastily. "Surely not your wife?"

"No," returned the other, quickly. "No, no, sir, my Ada's safe at home. It's a—friend of ours."

"Is she much hurt? Pray let us take her home. The carriage is waiting."

"No, thank you, sir. I'll get her into a cab, and we'll be home in no time. There's a doctor lives close by our street."

"I shall send to-morrow to ask how she is. If anything happens I shall never forgive myself. Does she live with you?"

"She's been staying with us some time. Good-night, sir," impatient to get rid of the inquirer.

"Who was it?" asked Muriel, with anxious face, as her husband re-entered the carriage. "Oh, I hope she was not killed!"

"She is alive," answered Charles. "It's a friend of poor Tom Gibbs, whom I pointed out to you the other day; he is taking her home. I shall go round in the morning."

"It was a woman?" asked Frank Bertram, speaking for the first time. "Was she young?"

"I didn't see. Gibbs stood between me and her. His one object seemed to me to be to get rid of me."

"The poor are very jealous of their friends," remarked Frank. "Perhaps it was his daughter."

"No, no. Tom has not been married long. I was afraid it was his wife. Muriel, you must go there with me to-morrow."

Muriel went, but without her husband. It seemed to her she would get on best with the sufferer alone, so Mr. Stuart took her to the corner of Mint Street, and then left her to her errand of mercy.

A pleasant-faced woman came to the door with a child in her arms. Muriel explained who she was, adding that her husband had sent her to ask if there was anything they could do to assist in the trouble they had so unfortunately caused.

"I am so sorry," said Muriel, sympathy gleaming in her blue eyes. "I feel as if I should never care to get into the carriage again. It was so sudden; before we knew anything about it the mischief was done."

Ada thawed a little at this speech. She had felt decidedly angry with Mr. Stuart, his coachman, and all belonging to him, before; she asked the visitor to walk in, and placed a chair for her in Beatrice's own parlour.

"I'm sure it wasn't your fault," she said, simply, "and it's very kind of you to come and ask after her. I suppose accidents will happen, only I can't help wishing it had been to anyone in the world but our Queenie," the pet name slipping out in her emotion.

"Was she your sister?" asked Muriel.

"No, not my sister, my best friend. Somehow in our class of life friends often hang together more than sisters," wondering whom she had seen like Mrs. Stuart, but utterly failing to identify the daintily-dressed young matron with the tall, lanky, shabby girl of four years before.

Muriel could not subscribe to this sentiment.

"Is she very much hurt? What does the doctor say?"

"She is wonderfully little hurt considering, but there is some injury to the head, and they are afraid of brain fever. The doctor says it'll be every bit of three months before she's about again."

Muriel felt uncomfortable. She had come fully meaning to offer pecuniary assistance, but she found it difficult.

"May I send you a nurse? Mr. Stuart and I both wish to do all in our power to remedy the mischief we have caused."

"Thank you. Tom often says what a kind man Mr. Stuart is, but a nurse couldn't do my poor dear any good. She isn't here, Mrs. Stuart."

"Not here?"

"The doctor said a deal about nursing, and you see I know nothing much about it, and with the baby and Tom I haven't much time, if I did, and she couldn't have much comfort here. I was brought up to the leg business—the dancing, I mean, and I don't understand illness, so when we looked at it every way we couldn't say no."

"Say no to what?"

"Our doctor—he's something at a hospital—and he thought Queenie would be better off there. It isn't that we wanted to get rid of

her, but because he said she'd have more chance there."

Muriel understood by the moist eyes and the grieved voice that Mrs. Gibbs meant just what she said.

"She will be much more comfortable, and of course you can't have much time for nursing. Is that your little boy? What a pretty baby."

"Isn't he," exhibiting little Frank in all the glory of his worked dress and blue sash; "not four months old yet; isn't he a beauty. I hope if it's only for his sake poor Queenie may get over it."

"Is it her child?" instinctively feeling guilty towards the unconscious baby.

"Yes. Just all she's got in the wide world."

"And she is a widow, poor thing? Has she lived with you long?"

"Ever since she lost her husband," using the word to mean estrangement, not death, while Muriel naturally took it in the latter sense, "before Frankie was born."

Muriel stole another look at the fatherless child whom her husband had well nigh made motherless too. The exquisite neatness of his dress, the dainty case bestowed on him, struck her; to look at the boy no one would have taken him for a poor widow's child.

"If we can be of any use you must let me know. I shall send to ask how his mother gets on. What is her name?"

"Franks, ma'am," was the short reply, and Muriel departed.

It was sorely against the wishes of Tom and his wife that Beatrice had been taken to the hospital. The doctor had protested that constant attendance and the most skillful nursing alone could save her; that they had consented to the question being put to her.

"Don't go unless you want to, dearie," enjoined Mrs. Gibbs. "It's only Dr. Naylor thinks you might get better sooner there; indeed I'd not part with you for anything else."

Beatrice, weak and feeble as she was, understood. With her faint voice she whispered to the doctor:

"Am I in danger?"

The beseeching violet eyes seemed to read his very soul; he could not have deceived her.

"Yes; but there is hope."

"Save me if you can," she entreated, "for my boy's sake—my little fatherless child."

"You would have a better chance at the hospital," he said, persuasively.

"Then I'll go. Only if I am to die you'll let me see my child again, once more, won't you?"

"Indeed I will."

They carried her an hour later to the hospital, not one of England's famous institutions, but a small refuge in Islington, not very far from Mint Street, where about a dozen patients were received and watched over and tended by the gentle hands of a band of sisters of mercy. Dr. Naylor was the physician who visited S. Mary's, and through his influence the ladies willingly received Beatrice. Their hospitality was meant for such cases, not the poorest of the poor, but such as, able to keep themselves in health, were yet powerless to obtain the comforts sickness requires.

When she was laid on one of the white beds, and Dr. Naylor had given her some directions, the superior accompanied him from the ward.

"Do you think there is hope? She looks very ill."

"Brain fever is coming on fast from the injury to the head. If she has strength to rally from that, all may be well."

"It was an accident?"

"Yes; she was knocked down and run over by a carriage. It is a mercy she was not killed on the spot."

"Has she no relations?"

"None but a little child. Her husband has not been dead a year, but for the baby one would almost think it a mercy if she were taken."

Sister Mary went back to the ward. Beatrice was awake and conscious when the sister bent over her and tried to persuade her to rest. The

violet eyes were wide open. There was a strange, uneasy look in their depths.

"Are you going to stay here with me?" she asked, anxiously.

"Yes, I will not leave you."

"I am very ill. They have told me that. If I get worse, will you tell me? I couldn't die easy unless I knew first. I have something I must do. I must write."

The troubled, beseeching face went to the sister's heart.

"What is it you wish to write? Can't I do it for you?"

Beatrice shook her head.

"Not till hope is all gone; not till then; he wouldn't come; but oh, if I were really dying, I think he'd see me once again."

"Surely," said Sister Mary, "no one bears ill will to the dying."

"The dying! Am I dying? Oh, my child!" And Beatrice went off into hysterical weeping terrible to listen to, and fearfully trying to her exhausted frame.

It seemed she could not rest. She talked incessantly. Long before the day was over the lurid light of fever was in her eyes. Her brain seemed on fire. Dr. Naylor looked uneasy. They might save her, he said, but it was a fearful task.

For days the fever lasted. Beatrice knew no one, remembered no one. She could not sleep. It seemed as if her lovely eyes would not close. Sometimes she would be in a state of stupor; but generally she lay with her large eyes wandering round the room in search, surely, of one she never saw.

For the most part she did not speak, but ever and again she would call "Frank" in a tone of piteous entreaty, or beg him "not to be angry any longer." No other name passed her lips.

Ada Gibbs came and stood often in silent tears beside her bed. Beatrice did not know her. She seemed even unconscious anyone was there. They brought her child, the little one she had so idolised. In vain. She did not recognise him. Mother love was dead within her. The only person the poor wandering brain had power to recall was "Frank," and he did not come.

"Who is Frank?" asked Dr. Naylor one day of Ada Gibbs. "Her husband?"

Ada bowed her head. She would not trust herself to words. Had she known Frank's second name she would have gone boldly to him and told him his wife lay dying. Mrs. Gibbs hated this man more than she had ever hated anyone.

He had brought nothing but trouble to Beatrice. But for the months of sorrow which had preceded the accident its effects would not have been so terrible. Even now, if this one yearning wish could have been granted, and the husband she cried to so often brought to her side, Beatrice might have had a chance of life.

Mr. and Mrs. Stuart had been diligent in their inquiries, but it seemed to both the Gibbs threw a strange mystery round their injured friend. Nothing in the way of money would Tom Gibbs take from Mr. Stuart.

"When Mrs. Franks was well she paid them well for her keep and the child's. The good ladies at the hospital took care of her now, and he and Ada could surely give the boy his food and lodging without crying out about it."

"But if the poor woman dies, Gibbs," remonstrated Mr. Stuart, "you'll have the child on your hands. You must let me help you then."

"A child don't cost much," said Tom, grumblingly, anything but liking the term "the poor woman" as applied to Beatrice. "I daresay me and Ada won't be much the poorer. I never did believe in money, Mr. Stuart. I had a pound a week when I offered myself to Ada, and I've more than double that now."

"It's no use," said Charles, in the privacy of his home, to his two auditors, Frank Bertram and Muriel; "those Gibbs' are as obstinate as mules. Not a penny piece can I get them to take. Of course the woman's at the hospital, but then there's the child."

"Such a pretty child, too," put in Muriel. "I

should think, if the poor woman died, someone would adopt it."

"Is it a boy or a girl?"

"A boy. Frank, they call it."

"That tells a tale," said her husband, quickly. "If the boy's name is Frank the mother must have some other besides Franks. No woman would call her boy Frank Franks."

"What a romantic couple you two are," put in Mr. Bertram, lazily. "There are a great many queerer combinations in the world than Frank Franks, and I don't suppose those kind of people think much about how a name sounds."

"Don't speak so disparagingly of them, Frank. Tom Gibbs is a famous fellow, and his wife is a nice little woman, though she did dance in extraordinary costumes in burlesque. I met her more than once at Martle Villa, and Miss Grey wouldn't have had her there unless she was above the common run."

"Charles is always harping on Miss Grey. It's a good thing I am not jealous," said Muriel, gaily.

"You need not be, little girl. I looked on Beatrice as more of an angel than a woman, and I shouldn't care to marry an angel."

"No woman is an angel," said Frank, unceremoniously, "least of all an actress. However divine they look on the stage, they are very earthly off it."

"Back to the topic. I think he forgets sometimes Muriel, that you are a woman."

"She is the exception. That proves the rule."

"Find another exception," laughed Muriel, "and marry her."

Meanwhile in that quiet hospital Beatrice lay fighting the battle with death. They had cut off her lovely hair, and her face had grown thin and pinched. The wedding-ring would hardly keep on her wasted finger. For three weeks she had hovered between life and death; now the crisis was coming.

Dr. Naylor felt more interest in this case than in any other. He sat up all night, and Sister Mary with him. Beatrice was in a deep stupor; when she roused from it the change would have come. Of sheer exhaustion and prostration she would pass away, or gradually and slowly they would bring her back from Death's grim portals. Tick, tick, tick, went the doctor's watch which he held in his hand. No other sound broke the stillness of the room. Midnight had passed when he saw a change. Gently he touched the sister's arm. Another moment and Beatrice raised herself slowly and looked at them. The light of reason was in her lovely eyes.

"Speak to her," whispered the doctor.

"You are better now, dear," said Sister Mary, gently.

"Yes, but so tired—so very tired. Where am I?"

"With friends. You will soon be better now. Try and drink this."

And the nurse succeeded in forcing some beef tea down her throat. The head sank back wearily.

"I am so tired I could sleep now."

The violet eyes closed slowly, her breath came softly, regularly as a little child's.

"She'll do now," said the doctor, wiping his nose in a most extraordinary manner; "she'll do; care and good nursing and we'll soon have her round again. Poor thing, I suppose she's had a story. I wonder who that 'Frank' was."

"Her husband who is dead," returned the nurse.

The physician shook his head.

"So Mrs. Gibbs told me, but still I think not. Women don't call like that on men who are dead. Sister Mary, 'Frank' has played no small part in her life, I take it, and he's alive now."

"The danger was over. There was nothing

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CONVALESCENCE.

As by some degree of was

We every bliss must gain

The danger was over. There was nothing

more to fear. With care and good nursing, Beatrice might be as strong as she had ever been. Her convalescence would be slow and tedious; it might be months before she was able to leave the hospital, but the worst was over, all danger had passed.

Yet even as he gave the verdict, Dr. Naylor spoke gravely, even sadly, and Sister Mary, who had watched many a "case" with him, and knew his manner, well guessed that he was keeping something back. She questioned him eagerly, but he did not tell her anything to strengthen her suspicions.

"Don't let her worry or fret about anything; above all don't let her exert herself too soon. If she's in too great a hurry to get well, we may have all our work over again."

And that was all the gentle superior of the small, obscure hospital could induce him to say. For her own part she had grown too much attached to her charge during those weeks when she hovered between life and death to wish to part with her until she was really fit to take up life's burdens once more. So to all Mrs. Gibbs' eager inquiries, she repeated the doctor's verdict and comforted the kind-hearted little woman by assuring her that the slowest recoveries were often the most perfect ones.

She herself felt frightened at the extreme weakness of "Mrs. Franks." Long after all actual disease had passed away, she seemed so feeble and helpless as to be a complete invalid. Sister Mary, who had seen something of illness, guessed that the accident had not done all the mischief. There had been some great shock before, and months of patient sorrow-bearing. The strength had been worn out by trouble, and then when the firm will to bear up had been conquered by the accident, exhausted nature required weeks of perfect rest and ease to make up for the ravages of illness and anxiety.

So the spring faded into summer. A whole year had passed since Beatrice left Normandy, and she lingered still in the hospital. They called her better and spoke hopefully of the future, but she was helpless as a child, and could not walk across the room without assistance.

Dr. Naylor attended her as anxiously as though she had been a dear friend of his own, instead of a stranger thrown upon his compassion. Sister Mary had never seen him more interested in a patient. One day when June was almost over, he called her to a private consultation in her own sitting-room.

"You have seen a great deal of Mrs. Franks," he began, abruptly, "do you know anything of her history, Sister Mary?"

"She is a widow and without a relation in the world, save her little child."

"And how does she get her livelihood. The Gibbs' don't keep her for nothing. She is too proud for that."

"Oh, no. She used to work in a great many different ways. She copied music or private manuscripts, did point lace and illuminations for the fancy shops. She told me once she earned enough for her and the child easily."

"Well," said Dr. Naylor, "she must do none of these things again. I have been anxious about her eyes ever since that fever; I am certain now."

"Oh, Dr. Naylor, surely she is not going blind. Poor young thing, what a misfortune it would be to her."

"Blind! Not a bit of it," speaking quickly, to hide the feeling in his voice, "only her eyes are weak. I thought they might have grown stronger before she left here."

"They look so dear and bright."

"Appearances are deceptive about eyes as well as other things. If she uses them carefully, in a year's time they'll be as strong as ever they were, but," and the doctor spoke very seriously, "if she goes back to her point lace and music copying, in six months I shouldn't be surprised if she really were blind."

"But what is she to do; alone in the world and with that child depending on her?"

"She can do anything that doesn't directly affect her eyes. Keep house, walk, talk, in fact if she were only a rich man's wife, I shouldn't

have had to speak about her eyes at all. There's nothing of a woman's usual duties she couldn't do; only she must not overdo any one of them."

Sister Mary began to think trouble pursued her patient.

"I don't see what we are to do. Even when she is well enough she could not go but as a governess, because of the child."

"Well, you must think of something. I mean to send her to the seaside next week for a month, and when she comes back she'll be fit for work."

"To the seaside? Think of the expense, doctor."

"It's the only thing that will set her up. It's better to pay ten pounds to help a woman to help herself, than to be worried for a subscription to the hospital for incurables, or to pay additional poor rates."

She smiled; she understood him so well. It was the delight of Doctor Naylor's life to appear the most selfish of men; whatever kindness she did for his fellow-creatures—and his whole life was spent in this work—he took great care to let it seem he was merely gratifying some private fancy. He was not a very rich man, and ten pounds was something to him, yet he gave it willingly, "to save himself from increased poor rates."

"I will tell Mrs. Franks of your kindness," returned Sister Mary, gratefully. "I think with you that a change is the only thing that will set her up."

"Don't tell her anything about kindness; it's just a suitable arrangement, nothing more. I'll speak to her myself to-morrow."

She was up and lying on the sofa in the superior's sitting-room when he came. There were no stiff rules at St. Mary's; it was more a home for the sick than a hospital. Very pale and delicate she looked in her black dress, her short hair smoothed back beneath a plain white cap.

She seemed now the widow she had never called herself. She had worn black since she came to Islington from choice. When the Sisters got her a cap to hide how short her beautiful hair now was, they had not un-naturally chosen one suited to a widow. No one to look at her would have supposed her not to be a widow, and little Frankie not an orphan.

"This is better," said Dr. Naylor, cheerfully; "it's quite time you were getting on; why it's two months and more since I brought you here, and Mrs. Gibbs must be thinking we are never going to cure you."

"I shall soon be well now. I want to go home so much. When do you think I shall be able to leave the hospital, Dr. Naylor?"

"Next Monday."

"Next Monday? May I really go home so soon as that?"

"Not home; not yet awhile; we must send you to the seaside first. A month at Sandgate and you'll be as strong as the best of us."

"I can't go to the seaside," said Beatrice, gently. "I have been idle so long that I must get to work as soon as I can."

"Not a stroke of work shall you do till you come back from the seaside, and you're going there next Monday. Dear me, it's a good thing the rest of my patients aren't so rebellious as you are. I'm going off now to see Mrs. Gibbs, and tell her and the youngster to be ready to go to Sandgate on Monday."

Off he stalked as good as his word. We fear he somewhat overstepped the truth in his assertions to Ada. He informed her that nothing would set Mrs. Franks up so much as a month at the seaside. After the first week he believed she would be able to manage for herself, but surely Mrs. Gibbs would go down and settle them. Ada protested something about the expense, but Dr. Naylor said everyone who went to St. Mary's Hospital had a change afterwards, and she was overruled.

"Don't let her do a stitch of needlework, or touch a paint-brush, and mind she doesn't fret," he concluded, as she let him out. "And as soon as she's back in Mint Street send me a line, and I'll come round and see her."

Ada was delighted. Beatrice must really be mending at last; as to the banknote the doctor had left in her hand, she felt it was easier to take money from him or from the sisters of St. Mary's than to accept the help Mr. Stuart tried to press on her as compensation.

"Mr. Stuart's a good-natured man; but it seems to me taking his money would be like his paying for the right of running over Beatrice; besides, I know Queenie don't want him or any of the old lot to know where she is."

Mr. Tom Gibbs graciously consented to be left alone for a week whilst his wife went "jaunting." The small preparations were made, and Ada, the baby and his mother, started on Monday morning just as Dr. Naylor had ordered.

By the sea waves Beatrice began to regain the strength she had lost; the change, the fresh air, the kind care of Ada, above all the sight of her child, seemed to awake in her some interest in life; she was so much stronger at the end of the first week that Ada went home bearing golden tidings to St. Mary's, and really believing that in a little while Beatrice might come home and resume the weary struggle Mr. Stuart's horses had for a time interrupted.

Left alone at Sandgate the improvement continued. Now that she had her boy to herself after these months of separation, Beatrice felt happy. It was a very different happiness to that which had been hers during the brief half year she had been Frank Bertram's companion. That had been joy, bewildering, perfect in its intensity; this was the peace which comes after many storms; the little harbour in which a vessel anchors after a dangerous voyage to refit for future travels.

Beatrice was by nature brave, looking her future boldly in the face; she did not shrink from it; surely years of absence would soften her husband's heart; surely when the time came that she lay dying he would forgive her the deception which, after all, had been for his sake.

She never pictured their reconciliation other-ways than a death-bed one, and in her dreams it was always she who went, Frank who stayed behind. Beatrice felt a sort of instinct hers would not be a long life; she could not wish it a very short one for her boy's sake. Her hopes were centered in her little child; he was the one bright spot in her future; the one being for whom she lived. Beatrice believed firmly he would be something great and wonderful. Perhaps when he was famous she might take him to Frank and say: "This is your son." And from such day-dreams Beatrice roused herself with a sigh to think of the long years that stretched between infancy and manhood.

Of course she thought of her husband, but somehow now that she had seen him since their separation the thought was not such pain. He had not done anything rash; he did not even look sad; he mingled in the world and enjoyed its pleasures; he had Mr. Stuart and his wife for his friends; his stately mother to share his home. She had been the chief sufferer; it was right since she was the sinner.

She thought of Frank's last letter; he had wished to forget her. Well, surely he had every chance; besides the presents she had left at Woodbine Cottage, which he could easily lock away, there was nothing to recall her to him; he could blot out the page of his married life from his memory; no one would mention her name; he would surely have his wish. And just as he had willed to forget her, so had she longed to remember him. She had dwelt on every detail of their brief love-story; she longed for anything that could recall him, and rejoiced because her boy had his father's eyes. While that child was spared to her she could never forget her husband; every day, every hour, would one Frank recall the other. Strangely, marvellously, as it seemed to Beatrice, she and her husband had each got their desire.

The month wore on. Beatrice was gradually becoming more like her old self; her cheeks grew fuller; her step lighter; the colour came back to her face; she looked better far than

before the accident; she wrote cheerfully to Ada Gibbs that she was a living advertisement of the benefits of Sandgate air.

She had implicitly obeyed instructions. She had not touched a needle; save for a few short notes to Ada she had not touched a pen. She spent her time in the open air, growing more like the beautiful girl who had been the admiration of the audiences at the New Theatre, and less and less like the pale, careworn woman whom Mr. Sturat's horses had done their best to remove from earthly troubles.

When the day was really fixed for their return to Mint Street, Beatrice began to think rather anxiously of the future. Thanks to the kindness of the sister and Dr. Naylor, she owed absolutely nothing for the expenses of her long illness, and she knew very well that the Gibbs would feel really wounded if she tried to repay them in money for the care they had taken of her boy. There was no burden of debt then to trouble her. She had only to think of the future; doubtless her former employers were now suited; still she did not despair. She was no more helpless than she had been last year; she earned her living then, why not now?

She knew nothing of the weakness of her eyes; they were tired certainly when she used them, but now that she was well again they would be all right.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A GENEROUS OFFER.

All nature is but art, unknown to thee,
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood,
All partial evil, universal good.

POPE.

THEY made quite a little fête in Mint Street on the evening of Beatrice's return. Jim Gibbs and his cornet were bidden to supper (the theatre which Jim honoured by his services having been closed for the execution of some necessary repairs), and Ada, her husband and brother, seemed to vie with each other in welcoming Mrs. Franks, and showing her that the humble house was really her home as much as theirs.

"How shall I ever thank you?" murmured Beatrice, when Jim and the cornet had taken leave, escorted on their homeward journey by Tom.

"Dear, dear," said Ada, lightly, "why we've done nothing much, Queenie. Who is there I'd like to see who wouldn't be kind to you?"

Queenie thought dimly the one heart in all the world she wished to be kind to her would not answer to the wish. Ada went on.

"It's just turned four years, Queenie, that you came to me and told me you meant to go on the stage. Do you remember, Queenie, how hard I tried to persuade you out of it?"

"Yes," hardly seeing what was coming.

"I told you there were a many blanks. Well, Queenie, you got one of the few prizes. Wouldn't you like to go back to it, my dear? There's not a manager but would be proud to engage you."

Beatrice shook her head.

"I can't, Ada. That's all over. I could never act again."

"For his sake," urged Ada, pointing to the sleeping child. "Don't you see, Queenie, you'd be rich then, and think of all you could do for him."

"Not even for my boy," replied Beatrice. "I am quite content with the little I can earn. Ada, I mean to go out to-morrow early and see the people I used to work for. Perhaps some of them may be glad of me again."

Ada shook her head.

"I wouldn't do that, Queenie."

"But why not? I am quite well now. You said yourself I looked strong."

"Yes, you look well. What did you do at Sandgate, Queenie. Did you read much?"

"No, it tired my eyes so."

"Point lace work is worse than reading, dear."

"But my eyes are stronger now."

"Yes, but not strong. Dr. Naylor came to-day, dear, and he told me you mustn't get your living at point lace and copying for quite a year, or else we might have you ill again."

Beatrice clung to her in alarm.

"I'm not going blind, Ada. Oh, tell me the truth. Am I really?"

"No, no," answered Mrs. Gibbs, quickly, "you're only to be careful. A little reading or a little working won't hurt you, but you mustn't do either for any time right off. Queenie, I couldn't bear for anyone else to tell you. We must think of another way for you to get rich, it mustn't be by point lace or painting."

She heard her husband's step, and with an affectionate good-night went downstairs. Left alone, Beatrice put one hand wearily to her head and wondered what was to become of her. She had noticed at Sandgate how an exertion tried her eyes, but she had not thought much about it. Now her means of subsistence seemed cut off, what was she to do.

She understood now why Ada had pressed her to return to the stage, but though this would have solved all her pecuniary troubles, Beatrice would not think of it. She was Frank Bertram's wife, and his wishes must influence her even if she never saw his face again. She had been endowed with one special talent, and she must not use it. The ordinary occupations of distressed gentlewomen alone remained to her.

As she lay awake she passed these slowly in review before her, and saw no break in her cloud of difficulty. Her affliction cut her off from needlework or any labour performed directly by the eye. Teaching and companionship alone remained. In either of these she must leave her child for long hours out of every day, even supposing anyone would engage a governess or companion without references. It seemed to Beatrice Bertram that there was no way out of her troubles.

When breakfast was cleared away and Tom had gone out she began to ask Ada's opinion. Poor Mrs. Gibbs having been brought up to the "leg business," knew little of any other, but goodwill can always suggest something, so Ada advised Beatrice to go and consult Sister Mary.

"She's a lady born, Queenie, like yourself, and I'm not; she might see lots of things when I see nothing."

Beatrice caught at the idea.

"I'll go at once, Ada, and take Frankie with me."

"I wouldn't go yet," replied Mrs. Gibbs, who had not expected her advice to be acted on so promptly; "Dr. Naylor said he was going to look round this morning, and you would like to see him. You rest quiet at home to-day; to-morrow will be time to go troubling yourself."

Mrs. Gibbs having by this time "tidied up," relinquished the rest of the work to her little servant, and sat down by Beatrice. She saw her friend's restless eagerness, and thought the morning would pass better for her in company than alone.

"To think this is the end of July. Why, Queenie, you've been away more than three months altogether."

"Yes. Did you miss me, Ada?"

"Indeed, we did. Tom and I said it seemed quite strange, and Jim said something wasn't right when he came round to play to us. Poor Jim, he don't get on very fast. He's third cornet still, dear, and not a chance of ever being anything else."

"Couldn't Mr. Gibbs get him an engagement at the Doric?"

"I'm afraid not. They've been doing neat business at the Doric, Queenie. Mr. Stuart's piece is running still."

"Fancy, and it began the night of my accident."

"It's a big success. I'm glad of it, he's a real gentleman. He was as sorry as could be about what his horses did."

"Did he come here, Ada?"

"No, but he went to see Tom lots of times at the theatre, and his wife came here once—the very day you were taken to St. Mary's. A pretty little thing; she is rather young for him,

though. She took a great deal of notice of baby."

"I remember her; I saw her at the theatre that night; she had hair like Muriel's; her face was turned away."

"Sure enough; I thought she put me in mind of someone; it was Muriel. She seemed quite sorry, Beatrice, and wanted to come and see you, but I told her they didn't like many visitors at St. Mary's."

"You did not tell Mr. Stuart that—"

"Lor', no, dear!" understanding her at once. "Neither he nor the little lady have any idea you are Beatrice Grey. I knew you did not want to be brought into the old set again; not but I think you are making a mistake, Queenie, still I won't tell till you give me leave."

"That will be never, Ada."

"You'll change your mind some day. There, I declare that is Dr. Naylor's knock. What a strange man he is. I used to think he hadn't a scrap of feeling; now I fancy he has more than most people."

She did not follow the physician into the little parlour, perfectly as she and Beatrice got on; she never cared to be present when Mrs. Franks had a visitor of her own rank; perhaps she felt then the social difference that really divided her from her friend.

"That's right," said Dr. Naylor, heartily, when he had shaken hands with his late patient, "you look a different creature. Ah, there's no doctor like Mr. Sea-air. He always cures the people I send him."

Beatrice smiled. There was something very cheerful about Dr. Naylor's warm, downright manner.

"I enjoyed it very much," she said, gratefully. "Oh, Dr. Naylor, how very much I owe to you and the kind sisters. But for you I should never have been spared to my little child."

"Well—well, mind you don't spoil him. I do hate spoilt children. I should like to box their ears all round."

Silence then, she wondering how to ask his advice about her future without seeming also to ask his pity, and he thinking of one night he had watched beside her bed and heard her despairing cry for Frank. Was "Frank" her dead husband? If not, who was he, and how could he stay away from such a woman?

Beatrice spoke first.

"Ada has told me what you said about my eyes. Oh, Dr. Naylor, did you really mean it?"

"I never say what I don't mean!" a little gruffly. "Don't fret about it. In a year's time your eyes'll be as strong as anyone's."

"Yes, but now?"

"Well, there are heaps of things in the world for women to do without killing themselves by working point lace for other people to wear. It's madness to earn one's living by needlework—utter madness."

Beatrice wished sadly he would name just one of the "heap of things." How could she have overlooked it in her anxious hours of thought last night? Perhaps the question appeared on her face, for the physician went on:

"You're not a bit suited to take care of yourself. I never saw a woman less so. Have you no relations?"

She shook her head.

"I depend solely on myself, and I have my little child to take care of."

"So you have—so you have. Do you like the country?"

This question was so abrupt, and so utterly irrelevant that Beatrice started.

"I am very fond of the country."

"It's very dull in winter."

"I don't mind dullness," gravely. "I have seen so many troubles that a very lively place would jar on me."

"Three miles from any station," continued Dr. Naylor, as though quoting by note, "one old lady for sole companion; a gloomy old house with lots of rats, and perhaps a few ghosts. Now, would such a life suit you, Mrs. Franks?"

"I don't know—I don't understand," said Beatrice, feebly.

"Look here, you aren't fit to take care of yourself. My mother isn't fit to take care of herself. She wants a companion; you want a home; it seems to me to fit in very well."

"But I have no references," stammered Beatrice; "and then there's Frankie."

"Frankie can go with you; he'll thrive in the country. As to references, I'll be your reference. Say, is it a bargain?"

Bewildered, confused, yet realising through it all the rare generosity of the offer, Beatrice answered:

"Yes."

"That's right. Well, I'm going down to see my mother to-morrow, and she'll fix a day for you to come. You're sure you don't mind the rats?"

"Quite sure."

(To be Continued.)

BE HONEST WITH YOUR CHILDREN.

INTERVIEW with Col. Ingersoll: "I haven't any. Don't believe in family government. I don't correct my children at all. I warn them of the consequences of evil habits, but I tell them they could never do anything bad enough to make me hate or disown them. I keep a pocket-book in a drawer, and they go and help themselves to money whenever they want it. They eat when they want to and what they want to. They sleep all day if they choose, and sit up all night if they desire. I don't attempt to coerce them in any way. I never punish and I never scold. They buy their own clothes, and they are masters of themselves. I teach them that everything we have we own in common; it is just as much theirs as mine."

Here's a sample of the way I handle my children: One of them got a valuable illustrated book one day, and marked and tore it. She said, "I did it." I took her up and hugged and kissed her and gave her lots of good advice. She has never troubled me since. If my children lie, I tell them, "Bless your souls, I've lied a thousand times, but I never made anything by it." I tell them lying don't pay. Don't claim before your children to be better than you are. Be honest with your children if you want them to be honest with you.

PERMANENCE OF MARRIAGE.

THE home of a married pair who are united heart and soul is the happiest spot on earth. In the shelter of such a home, in the warm atmosphere of household love, spring up the pure affections of parent and child; father, mother, son, daughter; of brothers and sisters. Whatever makes this insecure, and divorce frequent, makes a marriage not a union for life, but an experiment which may be tried as often as we choose, and abandoned when we like. And this cuts up by the roots all the dear affections of home; leaves children orphaned, destroys fatherly and motherly love, and is a virtual dissolution of society. We know the great difficulties of this question, and how much wisdom is required to solve them. But whatever weakens the permanence of marriage tends to dissolve society; for society is germinated and upheld by happy homes.

In the new Criminal Code two offences are to be taken off the list of those which constituted the highest crime in the realm. It will be no longer high treason to kill the Lord Chancellor or to assault the eldest daughter of the Sovereign.

USE OF THE SERVANT GIRL.

HERE is the point raised by a certain optimist philosopher that the servant girl is put into this world for a good and useful purpose, has been held, by the vast majority of people, to be highly problematical, not to say chimerical. We have been willing to accept the festive mosquito as one of the mysterious evidences of nature's inscrutable wisdom, but we have never been willing to look in the same liberal light at the heavy-handed maiden who smashes, habitually and unceasingly, thrice her wages in china.

FRINGED WITH FIRE.

By the Author of "Bound to the Trawl," "The Golden Bowl," "Poor Loo," etc.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ON THE TRACK.

Of courage you saw little there,
But in its stead a medley air
Of cunning and of impudence.

WORDSWORTH.

LEFT alone in the hired carriage, and realising that Rosalind had been torn away from her, and convinced that the fate intended for the girl was death, or still worse, Mrs. Vere was for a few seconds quite overcome with terror and dismay.

She had screamed for help, or had begun to do so, but threats and the utter improbability of there being any rescuer within hearing had silenced her, and now the poor lady was left to harass her mind with horrible thoughts, and to try vainly to recognise some familiar object in the surrounding darkness in the hope of finding out where she was.

A movement of the carriage roused her. The horse was restive, and she soon ascertained by letting down the front window and stretching out her hand, that the driver was no longer on the box, and she became alarmed for her own safety, for it was clear that the man must either have run away or have been injured.

Not without difficulty Mrs. Vere scrambled out of the carriage, that was now on the move, the horse being impatient to get back to his stable, and she felt convinced, though she did not know the neighbourhood, that they must have been driven more than a mile out of the town.

As I have said, the night was densely dark. Also, the hour was late, not far from midnight, but she could see the lights of the town in the direction from whence they had come, and so gathering her warm cloak round her, she set out resolutely to walk back and seek at once for help.

She remembered and noted carefully every object she passed, for it might furnish some clue by which Rosalind could be traced, and after a short time her heart beat high at hearing the sound of a horse's hoofs approaching; she quickened her pace and called out:

"Who is there? Oh, help, help!"

And the next instant the light from a bull's-eye flashed in her face, and she found she had met a mounted policeman.

Her tale was soon told, and the patrol, after a few questions, chiefly relating to the fly she had left, and the driver, of whom she could tell him nothing, directed her to a house not far off, which served as a police-station, and told her to repeat her story there and tell the inspector to telegraph for aid, and he rode on, promising to return there as soon as he had satisfied himself about the fly and the man who had driven it.

This encounter nerved Mrs. Vere. She was not physically a strong woman, but when once

roused her spirit and energy would carry her through more excitement and fatigue than a far more powerful-looking woman could bear, and she walked on now, unconscious of distance or of anything but her earnest desire to rescue Rosalind.

A sleepy inspector and a very drowsy-looking policeman were in the police-station when she entered it, but they roused up directly they heard her story and the message the mounted patrol had charged her to deliver.

"That's a rum start. Abduction. A planned thing evidently. You know the man who carried her off, I suppose?"

"No, but a man has been annoying my daughter for several days past."

"What is his name?"

"I don't know. A strange note he sent to her was signed Charlie."

"Umph; nothing very distinctive about that. What was he like?"

Mrs. Vere described him as minutely as she could.

The inspector pricked up his ears. He had always held firmly to the belief that he should one day become famous, should hunt out some noted criminal, bring him to justice, receive a large reward, and be offered some high position of trust and importance in the police or detective force.

Thus for years he had gathered particulars of every murder that had taken place in the United Kingdom, and had, without delay, whenever it was practicable, obtained a photograph of the suspected criminal.

Only the day before he had been carefully studying a carte-de-visite of Charles Rentroll, the suspected perpetrator of the Worcester murder, and, singularly enough, this strange lady's description of the man who she believed had carried off her daughter, reminded him in many respects of the photograph.

He did not give utterance to the thoughts that flashed through his mind, however, but asked so many questions as to what the man was like that Mrs. Vere at length said somewhat impatiently:

"Give me pencil and paper and I'll draw a portrait of him. You have telegraphed for help, haven't you?"

"Yes, ma'am, and it's coming at once. I haven't lost a second while we've been talking. Here you are, ma'am."

And he placed pencil and paper before her. Some people have the knack—one can hardly call it a talent—of being able, with a few strokes of pen or pencil, to sketch the features of any face they remember with such fidelity as to produce a likeness almost startling.

Mrs. Vere was particularly clever at this kind of thing. Often enough, for the amusement of her children, she would sketch a face when she wished to describe it, and now, while telegraphic messages were being sent in all directions for help and information, she drew a terribly accurate likeness of Charles Rentroll, as she had seen him more than once at the theatre.

The inspector's eyes flashed, and a look of triumph came into his face as he glanced at the paper. Then he carefully folded it up, put it in his pocket-book, and taking from this same book a photograph, he held it before Mrs. Vere's astonished gaze.

"The same!" she exclaimed, in bewilderment.

"Yes; but say nothing, and if we once catch him he won't trouble you again."

"Do you think we shall catch him to-night?" asked the woman, nervously. "My daughter may be ruined, remember. Oh, think of her awful situation. More than you can imagine depends upon our saving her. She is engaged—that is, a nobleman wants to marry her. Oh, dear! oh dear! Can nothing be done?" And she wrung her hands helplessly.

"Is she a young woman likely to be frightened, and give in at the first threat?" asked the man.

"Oh, no. She is cool and daring—as though she were a man," with a gasp.

"Then don't you bother yourself. We've telegraphed all about. We'll have scouts

in shortly. You can go back to your hotel, or you can stay here. Why, what's the matter now?"

The sound of a voice had fallen upon Mrs. Vere's ears, and she had started to her feet anxiously.

"It's one of them," she said, fearfully; "one of the men who opened the carriage door and took my daughter away from me. Don't you hear his lip?" He has an impediment in his speech. I could swear to his voice, though I did not see his face."

"Very well; be quiet. Step in here and wait," and the inspector hurriedly opened the door of a small room, closing it upon the lady as two policemen, with a couple of prisoners, came into the room and up to the desk.

"I thay, you've made a miltake. I wath paid off my thip thith morning, and we wath talking of a thip, not of a young woman," the man with the lip was protesting.

"Silence! What is the charge?" to one of the constables.

The man removed his hat as he said:

"We were sent from the chief office, 25 and me," with a nod at his fellow policeman, "to come here, as a young lady had been abducted, and we was walking along the road when we heard some men behind a hedge quarrelling. They were having a row about money. One said he'd done the work and not got his full share of pay, the other said he'd dragged the young woman from the carriage and carried her till his arms was fit to break, and he'd have as much as the rest, or he wouldn't have nothing, and he'd go and blow on the whole of them. They was making a division of the money when we pounced on 'em and collared these two, and the rest made off."

"Now, prisoners, what have you to say? Remember any statement you make will be taken down and may be used against you."

The two men looked at each other with evident distrust, then, at the inspector. They had not failed to notice that the police had already received news of the abduction, for the very man who had caught them had been sent for on this very business.

The man with the lip, who had certainly done most of the work in the matter, had received nothing for it, his more lucky companions having got off with the spoil, which Rentroll had injudiciously given to one of the gang to divide instead of paying each man individually.

He with the lip, who called himself Morton, knew well enough that now he would never receive a penny for his night's work, all the more reason, therefore, why he should shift the onus of the blame upon others, and by divulging all he knew, try to make his own punishment as light as possible.

"It ith true," he said, "we were quarrelling over the money. We wath engaged by a gentleman to stop a carriage, take a young lady out of it, and carry her to another one, and the gentleman drove her in that one to an empty houth called the Willoth on the North Road, and we did it. The coachman of the carriage that the ladith's were in wath drunk, and he wath bribed to go the wrong way; and thath all. The gent give long Bill ten quid for the lot of uth, and I ain't had one brath farthing of it."

"You have voluntarily made this statement," said Inspector Smirke, reading it over to him.

"Yeth, and I hope my giving information will be remembered."

With which he grinned in malicious triumph at his companion, as both were marched off to the cells.

"There, we have the address, if that scoundrel is to be relied upon. Now to go armed with all necessary documents. We won't let you escape if we can help it, Mr. Charles Rentroll." With which having again set the telegraphic wires in motion, Inspector Smirke left a subordinate in charge for the time and himself walked to Holly Bank, which was a quarter of a mile off, and where Colonel Grey, a magistrate, resided.

The Colonel was not an amiable man at the best of times and it is scarcely wonderful that he now used particularly strong language at being roused out of his first sleep and asked to

sign a warrant for the arrest of a man on the charge of murder, or that the Rev. Orlando Brown, his son-in-law, who was on a visit to him and was also a magistrate, should vote Inspector Smirke a very troublesome person. It was done, however, and by the time, the ambitious officer had returned to where poor anxious Mrs. Vere was waiting for him, further re-inforcements and more information had arrived, and the patrol whom the lady had met had likewise come in.

He reported that he had found the empty carriage, with the driver not far from it, drunk and insensible.

So far the prisoner Morton's story was corroborated. Who can say how devoutly Mrs. Vere hoped that the rest of his information would prove to be equally true, and that they would soon effect the rescue of her daughter? After what appeared to her numerous and unnecessary delays, the party set out. Long as the time may have seemed, not more than an hour had elapsed since Rosalind was dragged from the side of her stepmother.

Mrs. Vere insisted upon accompanying the party of constables headed by Mr. Smirke to the house indicated.

True, it was past midnight, and the distance to be traversed was not inconsiderable for a tired woman to undertake on foot, but this last difficulty was overcome by the timely appearance of the fly in which she and Rosalind had left the theatre. One of the policemen was ordered to drive and the Inspector and Mrs. Vere got into the vehicle, and followed by the rest of the constables set out for the Willows.

Slowly it seemed to the impatient woman through long lanes and roads, past cottages, fields and trees, all of them nearly hidden in the dense darkness. For the moon did not shine, not a single star peeped through the rifts in the dark clouds, the wind blew cold and dimly, and occasional drops of rain or blobs of snow were driven in the faces of the small but earnest party.

They reach the spot indicated by Rentroll's accomplice at last: house standing alone, and fronting the road. A great wall running from each side of it enclosed the whole of the back part of the premises, as though it had been a prison.

One of the policemen remembered that it had been "To let" furnished for a long time and if let now it certainly gave no sign of habitation.

Step! Before the house and on the gravel leading up to the door there is the mark of wheels; an accumulation of mud still wet and the prints of many feet on the doorstep, so that, though the place seemed deserted, it was quite evident it had recently been entered by more than one person.

The policeman knocked at the door! No reply! They tried the bell, making its shrill tone echo through the night air. Still no one came to open the door. Was it imagination or did Mrs. Vere really hear a shriek?

She vowed that she did! She believed it, and urged on by her entreaties and their own impatience, the men began to knock and ring in a violent manner. So loud and incessant was the noise they made that they scarcely heard the withdrawal of the bolts and chain and therefore the door seemed to open suddenly before them.

"Well, I hope you're making row enough waking respectable folks out of their beds," said a tall, bony, coarse-visaged woman confronting them with a candle in her hand.

"Does Mr. Rentroll live here?" asked Inspector Smirke, not deigning to notice her tardiness in answering his summons.

"No," curtly.

"Who does live here?"

"My master and me."

"What's his name?"

"How should I know? I was only 'gaged to-day."

"My name's Molly if that's any good to you."

"It isn't; go and tell your master I want him."

The woman hesitated; She knew there was something wrong, she was meditating how she could escape, when a voice called to her from a flight of stairs at the further end of the hall.

Before she could reply, however, there were screams, the sound of a struggle, followed by shrieks of "Murder! murder!" and the police without any further pause or hesitation rushed into the hall and up the broad staircase to the rescue of some poor woman in dire agony and peril.

Taking advantage of the confusion the coarse-visaged female who had opened the door let her candle fall, and knowing her way about the neighbourhood took herself off in the darkness and was at a very safe distance from the scene before she was missed.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"IN THE QUEEN'S NAME!"

Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace,

That press the soul or wring the mind with

anguish,

Beyond comparison the worst are those

That to our folly or our guilt we owe. BURNS.

"CLARA, forgive me for bringing you here against your will, but you would not listen when you were free," said Rentroll, as Rosalind stood by a table looking at him with mingled anger and scorn in her dark eyes.

"Once again I tell you my name is not Clara," she returned, contracting her brows angrily; "you are labouring under a delusion," she went on. "You must take me for some other person."

"We will discuss that directly," replied the man, with unruffled politeness; "will you excuse me a few minutes?"

"I will gladly excuse your presence altogether," with a haughty turn of the head.

How it was she did not know, but from the moment Rosalind Vere met Charles Rentroll face to face, she his prisoner, he her gaoler, all fear of him seemed to leave her.

Whether she thought she was playing a part in some drama upon the stage, or that, looking at this man, she ceased to dread him, I cannot say, but when he left the room she walked slowly to the fire-place, seated herself within reach of the bell-rope, and then turned to take stock of the apartment in which she was a prisoner.

It was a large spacious room, with deep bay windows with heavy curtains, carefully drawn, and no doubt the windows themselves were barred and bolted; but she did not go and examine them, possibly she was being watched all this time, and she determined that if she died for it she would show no sign of fear.

Unlike poor, weak, yielding Clara, whose counterpart she was as far as all external characteristics went, Rosalind was firm, resolute, and daring, even to recklessness.

She had been brought up in a harder, sterner school than Clara, also she had early learned the value of self-restraint and likewise of self-assertion, and her very fearlessness was in itself a protection to her.

So she sat here, looking at the ancient and time-worn furniture, at the pictures stained with damp and discoloured with dust; at the moth-eaten carpets and furniture, and she noted with a shiver the chilly atmosphere of the room, which the blazing fire and the burning lamp could not entirely overcome.

She still wore her hat and her long fur-lined paletot in which she had left the theatre, and she was wondering somewhat anxiously what the result of this night's work would be, when a door suddenly opened and a woman came into the room.

A tall, gaunt, muscular, hard-featured woman, who could not quite hide her surprise at seeing the girl who had been brought with so much difficulty, sitting in this calm, self-possessed manner, as though the place were her own.

For some seconds this creature had been listening outside the door for sobs and tears, but hearing no sound she had come in expecting to be assailed by entreaties and the promise of a bribe, but here was the captive sitting as composedly as though she were in her own drawing-room, and nothing unusual had occurred.

Rosalind looked at the intruder calmly, and felt instinctively that she could hope for no help from her, and having come to this conclusion she said, with cold displeasure:

"I did not ring."

"No, miss; but I thought you might like something after being out in the cold. A glass of wine, or a cup of tea, or"—lowering her voice to a confidential whisper—"a drop of spirit, maybe?"

"I want nothing but to be alone," returned the girl, curtly.

And the woman, who had hoped to receive an order for something of which she could herself partake, flung herself out of the room, banging the door behind her.

"She's a tartar, for all she looks so soft and pretty," was her mental comment, "and it's my belief she'll lead him a longer dance than he thinks for. Well, never mind; the longer the better, says I. I'm paid for time, and the pay's good, anyhow."

With which she retired to the room set apart for herself.

A few minutes afterwards Charles Rentroll, having paid off his desperadoes, returned to the room in which Rosalind was sitting. Very cosy and warm this apartment seemed compared to the rest of the house, though the girl had thought it chilly, and very lovely was its charming occupant.

Rentroll came over to the fire-place with a smile on his dark but handsome face, and holding out both hands, said, in his most winning tones and manner:

"Now, Clara, let us be friends. Throw off this pretence of not knowing me. I mean you no harm. I will do you none. I have the licence already. We will be married as soon as possible, then we will go off to the Continent and visit the places together which we have so often talked of. Your fondest dreams shall be realised, and I will devote my life to your happiness. Why do you still hold back? Two months ago you would have perilled your soul for what I offer; now you look upon me as though you thought I had gone mad. Surely you are not so vindictive and unforgiving as to remember our last interview against me, and because I could not marry you then determine that you will not marry me now?"

Rosalind looked at him, as she well might do, in amazement.

His words were unaccountably strange, and they conveyed no meaning to her mind, yet what he said did not sound like the tale of a madman, or if it were madness, there was method in it.

She had pulled up a card-table before her as a kind of barricade, and she had leaned her arms upon it as he spoke. Now, she took off her hat, placed that before her, and then said, in a puzzled tone:

"You had better take a seat and tell me whom you imagine me to be, for you are certainly labouring under some extraordinary delusion."

Something in her tone, her manner, the movement of her hands, the proud, calm, self-possessed expression of her face, the way in which she spoke and looked at him, were so unlike poor, timid little Clara, that a doubt—and not a pleasant one under the circumstances—flashed across his mind, and he said, involuntarily:

"Dear me, how you have changed."

"Indeed I have not," was the reply; "unless you speak of years ago; then I might have been different."

"I parted with you not more than two months ago on the banks of the Severn; at Worcester. Come, Clara, don't deny everything like this." He was getting impatient, particularly as the doubt grew upon him the more he spoke with her and watched the play of her features.

"You had better tell me whom you take me to be," she said, fixing her eyes coldly upon his.

"Then I will tell you who I am."

"Well; we will play the farce out," and he laughed uneasily.

But she made no comment, and he went on: "You are Clara Cousins, the only daughter of Dr. Cousins of Worcester. I first met you with

our mutual friend Florence Edgcombe; we met and corresponded in secret. I always told you that it was doubtful if I should ever be able to marry you. We parted on,—let me see,—the 10th of last October, because I told you the acquaintance must end. Circumstances have changed and I am ready and anxious to marry you now."

"Thank you! Had I been the young lady you take me to be I think you would have been ready to marry me, or would have gone about your business long ago. But I have heard your version about myself: now listen to mine."

Rentroll bowed his head in silence. His doubts were growing into convictions, yet he was unwilling to be convinced.

It was this girl with whom he was in love, let her be who she would, though had he not believed her to be Clara he certainly would not have torn her from her friends in this violent manner.

"My name is Rosalind Vere, or, rather, Rosalind Vere Maloney," she said. "I have been on the stage for two years. If you have been in London you must have been blind not to have seen my portrait stuck about announcing the dramatic pieces in which I was to play some important part. I have been engaged at the 'Fantastic' for the last eighteen months, and see—if you doubt me any more here is a letter from Mr. Newton, the manager, urging me to be in town on Monday next in time for rehearsal."

And she handed the bewildered man a letter. Very slowly and deliberately Charles Rentroll read this epistle.

The mystery and his own perplexities seemed to deepen and thicken at every step. This letter that he read was evidently, from its tone, written by a man who had known the girl it was addressed to for some time. The writer said he relied upon her for the success of his new piece, reminded her of how she had worked and triumphed the year before, and urged her to make a similar effort now.

That was the pith and purport of the letter, and Rentroll, when he had read it twice over, re-folded it and laid it upon the table that stood between them, saying:

"I can't understand it. I should have been ready to stake my life that you were Clara Cousins."

"Are you satisfied that I am not?"

"No," slowly, gazing at her earnestly, and with a look in his dark eyes that made her face flush with anger and outraged modesty.

"No, you have done something to yourself," he went on. "There is a great change in you, I admit, but you can be no other than Clara, the woman I love—the woman whom I will make my wife."

"You will never make me your wife," said Rosalind, firmly, while she looked at him with more contempt and defiance than anger. "Never," she went on. "If I had no other reason your own conduct would put you outside the pale of consideration; and granting even that you were labouring under a false impression as to my identity, your behaviour and motives, even by your own showing, are most unjustifiable."

"It is very well for you to talk in this strain," said Rentroll, leaning back in his chair, and feasting his eyes upon her lovely face and graceful form. "Outside this house, or before you were brought here, it might have had some effect; now it is too late. Your being here at this hour and alone will compromise you past redemption. To save your reputation you must marry me. If you are not Clara Cousins you are so much like her that I am quite satisfied to marry you. Don't you yourself see that it is the only possible reparation I can make for this night's work?"

Reparation or not, I will have none of it," replied Rosalind, positively. "The man whom I marry will be as unlike you as light is from darkness. Do you think I would trust my life and happiness with a man who thinks to win my love by violence, and my confidence by outrage? No; your wisest plan is to let me go at once, and as I never saw you before this week,

and I hope I may never see you again, it is possible that you may escape punishment for hiring your desperadoes to drag me here."

"You are no coward, at any rate," said Rentroll, with admiration, as he rose to his feet, "or you would not talk to me like this when you are so completely in my power. But your protestations are useless. I have here a marriage licence," and he unfolded the paper, "and even if I did not love you as passionately as I do my safety and your honour demand that our lives henceforth shall be spent together."

Rosalind laughed bitterly. Her temper was rising. She despised this man as much as she detested him, and putting up her hand to her head, she snatched from it the fancy poniard that adorned her hair and grasping it like one who knew how to use such a weapon, while the light from the lamp fell on its long, glittering steel, she said:

"This will protect my honour, and as for your safety the sooner you take care of that and place a safe distance between us the better for yourself."

Rentroll was amazed. Was this Clara? Was this beautiful fury the same girl who had trembled at his words and wept at his frowns? This girl, threatening her own life and his. He stepped back in dismay.

True, his first impulse had been to make a rush at and try to disarm her. But the table stood between them. Then she was reckless and desperate, and who could say what an excited woman would do under such circumstances. She might kill him, or herself, and would probably do one as readily as the other. So he fell back, holding up his hands with an imploring gesture, while he said:

"Don't act like a madwoman. I have not laid a hand upon you, and I won't—if I can help it. And why should you injure yourself? I hate to see a woman unwomanly and behaving like a tragedy queen."

"You seem to forget that I am an actress," with scornful disdain; "but you will find me capable of something far more serious than acting a part unless you at once set me free from this place, and relieve me of your repulsive presence."

In utter and complete bewilderment Charles Rentroll sat down on a couch at some distance from her, and looked at this beautiful but certainly dangerous young woman. His doubts had vanished.

It was Clara in a passion. He knew how rage and anger may transform a human being. Hitherto, he reminded himself, Clara had been only gentle, tender, and mournful, but of course there must be another side to her character, and he was now getting the benefit of it. Also, it was evident she cherished a bitter resentment against him for his past conduct towards her, and she had likewise without doubt made up her mind to sink her past name and identity and disown it.

The letter she had shown him was puzzling, but it might not even have been meant for her; and a woman who had started in a new career would no doubt be provided with means to carry out her deception.

So he reasoned, knowing little or nothing of the world in which Rosalind had lived, conscious only that the face and form, even the voice of the woman he had wooed and jilted was before him, and he resolved now, that, against whatever she might say, he would win and hold her.

As he thus sat and thought and gazed at her a smile came over his face, and he said, quietly:

"That was very well done, my love, but such excitement must tire you, particularly after your exertions this evening. I will not injure you personally. At the same time I cannot spare you, and in the meantime shall we have supper together? I am sure you must be hungry?"

"I shall not eat or drink under this roof," was the reply.

And she too resumed her seat, keeping the dangerous toy between her fingers. It was very



[MRS. VERE DRAWS A PORTRAIT.]

unromantic, I must admit; but Rosalind was hungry, and Rentroll's suggestion reminded her of the fact.

Singing, dancing, and playing the heroine in two exciting dramas in one night, is enough to make the most romantically constituted creature hungry, and she could not help thinking longingly of the nice little supper that must be waiting for her at the hotel.

"And my poor mother," she thought; "she will be frightened out of her life, and frantic with anxiety as to what has become of me."

In point of fact, also, she was hoping for her release. How, or from what quarter it was to come she could not tell, but every minute was a minute gained—a minute nearer the end, she fancied, and she resolved she would not sleep or eat or drink till she was free.

As she thus sat, looking at her enemy with his big black eyes fixed so unwaveringly and with such gloating passion upon her, an intense and irrepressible restlessness came over the girl. Every limb of her body seemed to rebel against inaction, and at length, unable to control herself any longer, or to endure the subtle influence that was gathering over her, she started to her feet, and began to pace up and down the room impatiently.

She kept as far from her captor as the size of the apartment would allow of her doing, and she held her dangerous toy in her hand ready at any moment to use it in self-defence. But she could not sit still.

Like a caged bird or a wild denizen of the forest suddenly confined behind bolts and bars, she walked restlessly backwards and forwards, with a steady, monotonous movement that made her gaoler, who sat watching her, feel as though if this continued much longer, he should fall asleep.

How long it lasted neither of them knew. It might have been minutes, it might have been hours.

The one going backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards as though performing some

dreary penance, yet never for one instant relaxing her grasp upon the handle of that tiny stiletto.

The other, watching her with a gaze of fascination, and also of fear, for who knew what a creature so changed as this girl, might do? Who could say, that if he were off his guard for one moment she would not spring upon and kill him?

This thought filled his mind when he started up with the dread that he was falling asleep. Rosalind paused, looking at him. Out of the complete stillness of the night, broken only at uncertain intervals by the fall of burnt ashes from the grate, a strange sound came.

Strange at this hour and in this place. It was the furious ringing of bells—and the thundering blows of the knocker on the house door.

"At last! Thank heaven! at last!" said the girl, and she fell on her knees for a moment and buried her face in her hands.

Rentroll stood listening. The colour had left his face, and his limbs shook with something like terror. Defeat and shame awaited him. His prize would escape his grasp, and he would be branded before all men as an unprincipled scoundrel, who could take a mean and cowardly advantage of an unprotected woman.

It was the shame rather than the punishment that he dreaded, and he turned to the girl, and said now in an entreating tone:

"Clara, save us both. Say you came here of your own free will. Surely you have punished me enough already?"

"Save you! At my own expense and with a falsehood," she said, bitterly, rising to her feet. "No, go and open the door," she went on, "or they will burst it in."

For again the imperious summons had been repeated.

"They dare not," he said, roused by her scorn.

And he ran out of the room to order the woman in his employ, and who was the only person besides

themselves in the building, not to open the door to anyone.

He was too late, however. With a view, no doubt, of taking care of herself, the woman was already in parley with voices in the hall, and when Rentroll paused at the top of the staircase, thinking how he could make his escape and secure his prisoner, he found her already at his heels.

"Go back!" he cried, sternly.

"I will not," was the reply.

Then there was a struggle, a scream, and a woman's voice shrieking:

"Murder! murder!"

That cry was enough. Life was in peril. There was a rush of feet, a flashing of lights. The woman who had refused the police admission, was thrust aside, and the next instant Rosalind Vere, with her hands bleeding from the dagger, that had been torn from her grasp, was rescued from the arms of her captor, while Charles Rentroll felt a strong hand upon his shoulder and the inspector of police said:

"I arrest you in the Queen's name!"

"I protest against your intrusion; it is illegal. This is my house; that lady is my wife. We were only quarreling, and—"

"I am not his wife," exclaimed Rosalind, impetuously. "He brought me here by violence this very night."

"I—" began Rentroll.

But the inspector interposed.

"I caution you that whatever you say will be used in evidence against you. We want you for the murder of Clara Cousins at Worcester on the 10th of October last."

"Clara Cousins! Why, she is there," falling back with horror, while he pointed with both hands towards Rosalind.

"I have cautioned you, remember."

And the next instant a pair of handcuffs were slipped upon the wrists of the unresisting prisoner. Unresisting, for Charles Rentroll had fainted.

(To be Continued.)



[STORMY LOVE.]

LORD JASPER'S SECRET;

—OR—

BETWEEN PALACE AND PRISON.

By the Author of "Lady Violet's Victims."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MAN ON CRUTCHES.

Oh, there's a fatal story to be told!

THE first weeks of Lady Fitzmaurice's honeymoon pass over in a whirl of luxurious joy; she has recovered her courage and self-possession, the strange warning on her wedding morn and the menace of a hidden dread have ceased to intrude on her peace; she has thrown down the gauntlet of defiance at those unknown persecutors; she has won and is content.

Lady Fitzmaurice is far more brilliant than she ever was, as the Countess de Remolles; her unreasoning excitability has fled; her voice is richer and deeper, her laughter more unforced, her enthusiasm more tense. It seems as if a heartbroken woman—indifferent to existence—has been suddenly plunged into ecstasy.

She sits for hours at her husband's feet, her hands clasped, listening to his reading, or sitting silent as he works (his lordship being occasionally busily employed in writing a three volume novel, is at times in a sort of mental mist), and Stephanie studies his expression continually, to be quite sure no tormenting doubts of his indifference to herself can be traced. She cannot be jealous as yet of his romantic and elaborate shadows, so long as she is entwined around his heart.

Lord Jasper, passive enough externally, appears thoroughly becalmed by the present. His wife is a novelty, and he amuses himself suffi-

ciently in deciphering her character and watching the varying shades of her rippling hair, and the delicate curves of her features. He plays on her various emotions by piquing, wounding and adoring her in turn, something like a skilful musician awakes harmony, discords and minor fugues on his instrument.

They are now at Brighton, staying at one of the most magnificent hotels on the parade, Mdlle. Josephine being thoroughly in her element, as everything appears delightfully changed with her ladyship. The most reckless costumes, the most costly dinner-dresses, that enhance her beauty and are worn with a certain feverish eagerness to secure her husband's approval, are all in accordance with the French-woman's tastes. Lady Fitzmaurice evidently means to be a leader of fashion, a queen of society, a graceful and charming hostess, the very ideal of the upper ten.

To-day they are at breakfast. Stephanie, wearing a morning dress of the palest pink shade—that exquisite hue which is never darker than the innermost cells of a young blush rose—is looking out over the sea, while Lord Jasper, scanning the columns of "The Times," stirs his coffee in languid abstraction.

A dish of the most delicious and tempting prawns, supported by crisp, hot French rolls, are at his elbow, and he has no cares worth mentioning, beyond getting through a princely income and devoting himself to a woman whose personal attractions cause him to be generally envied, and yet such are the morbid elements and ungrateful obstinacy of human nature, his lordship is very nearly miserable—not that hopeless misery of the poor and wretched—but the harmful depression which makes the voice of the woman one has married jar now and then unpleasantly on the nerves.

He has reached that culminating point in every honeymoon, when an outburst of some kind or other, opposed to the affectionate, would be welcomed as a relief.

"Would you like to see 'The Times?'" he asks, throwing down the paper and altering the

Venetian blinds to his satisfaction; "what a confounded glare there seems to be to-day through that window."

Never has Brighton looked lovelier than on this soft June morning; the haze out at sea seems to enshadow the sparkling town with a dreamy veil, lessening its whiteness and glare. The hot pebbles on the beach, caressed by the white foam of the waves, exhale the odour of ozone and sea-weed, while happy children with toy boats and spades are hastily carting them away, to the evident satisfaction of various excellent mammas in brown holland costumes, who, as they read the latest novel from Mudie's, find their thoughts drifting to the fate of the leg of mutton roasting at the lodging-house, and which is to supply the family dinner.

Stephanie casts her eyes hastily over the paper, reads an account of a morning concert, the names of the opera singers, of the dresses at a drawing-room, and yawns. The band on the New Pier is playing some sparkling music, and the windows of their room being open, the delicious strains are clearly wafted to them as they sit at breakfast.

Surely the most cynical philosopher, the most detestable misogynist living, must have paused ere repudiating the glory and triumph of the pure joys of conjugal bliss had he viewed Lord Jasper and his bride at this moment. Wealth, loveliness, health, and youth as presented at the Crescent Hotel—where could they be rivalled?

Stephanie is of herself a picture, and wearing a row of pearls that rivalled her throat in whiteness, is so superbly beautiful—the delicate Circassian bloom, strikingly thoroughbred and perfect—that she seems a being born to be protected and cherished, while Lord Jasper, pensively agreeable and tender, must surely be that presiding deity of all honeymoons—an adoring husband. But is he?

Stephanie's foot, graceful and arched like that of some chieftain's daughter of the desert, peeps from beneath her lace-edged robe; her hands have a sort of faculty of silent appeal as

they move to and fro with bird-like restlessness. Lord Jasper commences his breakfast.

"Well, Stephanie, and what on earth are we to do with ourselves to-day?" he asks, drawing the dish of prawns nearer. "I've almost had enough of Brighton; it's a trifle tawdry and loud, and one sees nothing all day but British matrons knitting or reading on the beach in mushroom hats. Kills art and poetry and that sort of thing, don't you know, these vinegar and mustard ideals of respectability."

"Oh, Jasper, they mean well, I am sure," Stephanie hastens to say, anxious to support the interests of the well-meaning matrons and their numerous olive branches.

"What do you say to leaving Brighton and going to Devonshire? I want to show you the old place, and everything will be got ready for us in a day or two."

But Stephanie adores Brighton. She cannot perhaps face the thought of solitary meditation at the grand old hall in Devonshire, neither is the vision of the long train of servants, the visits of the county families, the heavy dinners and general rusticity of green lanes and velvet lawns, perfectly inviting. She would fain forget the "marble halls" and the "rassals and serfs," in woo love amid the emerald gleams of the wastes, from the safe security of the new pier, Lord Jasper at her side.

"No, please don't think of Devonshire yet," she says, in her pretty submissive way. "I am so very happy with you here."

Lord Jasper directs a prawn at his leisure. "What do you say then to yachting? I'll have our yacht 'Hebe' moored off Brighton, and we can cruise about the Channel, or go in for a race. One of our princes is here, and he'd enter into it at once."

But Stephanie has a decided and almost exaggerated aversion to yachting; daylight amusements have never had much charm for this thorough "queen of the night," and the sea never suited her. She also dreads looking ugly and dilapidated after sea-sickness, and to wear some hideous, nautical dress in character with the yacht—she who revelled in soft laces, satins and gems, strikes her as the reverse of attractive.

"No, dear, anything but that. I'd rather go to Hillingford Towers and cultivate 'still life.'"

An impetuous answer rises to Lord Jasper's lips; his lovely bride often unknowingly irritates him. There have been many romances written since the Greek dramatist invoked the shades of Eros; but the suppressed mutiny of Cupid's rebels has never been sufficiently weighed. He has known so many eyens of Stephanie's type, and the irritating monotony of the fair sex in general has occasionally furnished his pen with subjects for satire.

"You seem to be inclined to oppose me," he says, shelling the finest prawn he can find rather viciously.

"Jasper," cries Stephanie, frightened at this change of tone—it is the first time her quick ear detects that subtle intonation of displeasure—"I'm always anxious to please you."

"Rather too much," he thinks, only he does not say it.

The suspicion of tears in her eyes rather increases his irritation. From a goddess tears are charming, from a wife detestable. He is also rather bored, and thinks a brisk quarrel, if thoroughly harmless, will rouse him from listlessness and languor.

"Well, then, the yacht shall come to Brighton," knowing she hates the sea more than Devonshire.

Stephanie's temper rises slightly here; slavish and idolatrous she cannot altogether tolerate the notion of looking at extreme disadvantage before him in a yacht.

"You know I detest the sea," petulantly.

He is anxious to test the quality of her "spirit" and temper, having been lately surfeited with worship. But he is too sacred and dear to Stephanie for her to risk any of the dangerous effects of anger, not understanding he prefers a steady fury of a few minutes duration.

"I can go alone, then," laughing and seizing another prawn; "we've almost had enough of this place; deuced long time it's seemed too sometimes."

"Are you tired of me already?" Stephanie very naturally asks, the tears now falling in anger and vexation.

"Of course, darling, I don't wish to be impolite, but the days are very long to kill, don't you know."

Stephanie, glancing at herself in an opposite gilt mirror, and re-arranging a delicious "corn" Venetian cap, rises and approaches the window, and something like a sob reaches his ears.

"Of course there are many more of our fellow-creatures about worse off than we are," he says, reading the "agony" column of the "Times."

"Just look, for instance, at that poor fellow yonder on crutches. A fine fellow he is, too. He seems to be amusing himself by taking stock of our windows."

As Stephanie gazes out of the window all her childish anger fades. The colour dies out of her face as she grasps the chair for support. He who rivets her attention appears a very rare type of man—tall and unusually broad-chested, with a trick of throwing back his head and tossing a loose lock of hair from his brow as he removes a green shade from his eyes.

These are remarkable—deeper and more unfathomable than the sea; eyes to haunt the memory with destructive persistence, and they are decidedly turned to the window at which Stephanie, in her pale pink robe, stands; but her dazed senses can scarcely distinguish his features for the sudden darkness across her vision.

The ready tears are all driven back to their source with the deadly chill of terror. They are frozen, numbed, bound by an icy spell. She draws the lace curtain across the window, and stealing round to Lord Jasper's side, kneels by him in her favourite attitude of devotion.

"Well, dearest, I won't tease you any more," Lord Jasper says, meeting her rose-bud lips with a kiss.

It seems almost a pity that a pretty flirtation cannot finish their reconciliation; but marriage renders this unnecessary. The lips that quiver at the touch of his are so white he glances at her, astonished at her agitation. He pushes the hair from her brow and draws her nearer to him.

"Why, you're actually trembling all over; and, darling, how pale you are! What a sensitive plant is this little wife of mine!"

"Why do I love you so?" she cries, revelling in his embrace with all the riotous passion which consumes and slays. "Jasper, it will kill me some day."

"Love rarely kills, even if his wounds are deep."

Her large, soft eyes were lit with fiery flames, and half closed as they met his.

"No, Jasper, but the want of it, the ceasing to be with the beloved object; never to clasp the hand of those we reverence and love; never to see the light of their eyes, or hear the tones of their voice—"

"By Jove! one would think you were writing a novel," his lordship says, smilingly. "Now, did you really think I meant all that nonsense about the yacht? Stay at Brighton till Doomsday if it has such rare attractions for you."

To his surprise she rises, and paler than ever, says, hoarsely:

"Jasper, I wish to see Hillingford Towers. I long to try the yacht for a change. Can we—rashly eager—"leave Brighton to-night?"

The man on crutches is now sitting on one of the large seats on the Marine Parade haranguing a Punch and Judy showman, and he good-naturedly drops a coin into the little bag the dog carries in his mouth. Clearly benevolent, this wounded hero on crutches. Stephanie notes this little pantomime on the pavement as Lord Jasper suggests their having a long, lary drive to the Dyke before luncheon.

"Get on your hat, Stephanie, and we'll have a drive to get up an appetite and that sort of thing," he says, his hand on the door.

"I feel ill, Jasper. I am not equal to the

drive this morning, and I want to write some letters. Take Anteros instead, and ride."

The awful contrast of that living fact outside and the passion and pain of her thoughts is all she can grasp at that moment.

"She's all nerve," he mutters, descending the stairs of the hotel, and taking up his riding-whip as he saunters out into the street. "Who could have believed a few playful words would have knocked her over like that? And I'd flattered myself I'd married a woman of the world. I hope she won't swoon and make a scene more often than is convenient."

The man on crutches swings round somewhat hastily as his lordship passes along the Parade, and anyone regarding him closely, might have seen he stroked his long and handsome beard and smiled. The peripatetic performer, his dog, and show are now out of sight.

Once alone Stephanie staggers to her feet, and with a piteous sob falls prone to the earth.

"Lost! Lost!" she cries, in an awful voice.

It is all she utters for a few seconds, as she wrings her hands. Then Stephanie rallies, and looks this new danger in the face.

"Oh, Hafiz, you must come to me! You only can help me baffle this threatened ruin. I will be calm and try and keep my senses, for I feel going mad."

Dare she glance again through the window? The hot sun-light now streams on her pallid features, drawn and convulsed.

"Oh, my happiness, my life," cries Stephanie, passionately kissing the likeness of Lord Jasper, which she wears in a gold locket attached to the pearl necklace; "you are leaving me for ever. Too soon to be cast into outer darkness—to be bruised by desolation. Dear heart of Allah, pity me! Show me the means of getting rid of—him!"

She has gently drawn down the blind, and the man on crutches, who notes everything, notes this, and he nods a little defiantly towards her, as if he compelled her to recognise him.

There is vivid distinctness in the daring insolence of the nod. The man whose genius has once held thousands breathless—the man for whose evil sake and fascination women have died and men crossed swords in savage wrath—will not be defied by Stephanie. A sudden faintness seizes her. There is a silent challenge in his eyes.

"He is alive, then, after all!"

And quick as thought she wonders if he can be destroyed—if some daring crime will rid her of this withering presence, facing her in the sun-light, something that will keep Lord Jasper in ignorance still.

Money, which buys everything, will buy the services of some poor wretch, surely, who has long carried his life in his hands, and with a paid assassin—no, Stephanie's hands are clear of blood; she will not stoop to murder. She will temporise, bribe, buy silence and salvation at the price of gold.

"If I could but turn myself into money and dash myself down at his feet," the poor creature mutters.

The door opens, and Mlle. Josephine enters.

"Ah, tiens! Is madame, den, ill?" eyeing her closely.

Stephanie steadies herself instantly.

"I wish a telegram taken at once to the office. Bring me the writing materials."

Her pretty lace cuffs are all torn and rent on the floor. Josephine believes the first conjugal passage of arms has concluded with these remnants.

The marble whiteness of Stephanie's face arrests the lady's maid's attention. Aaron's warnings—watch her closely, follow every move—instantly occur to her.

"There is something she dreads," the French woman mutters.

The man on crutches has now disappeared.

"Hafiz must come to me," Stephanie says, as she pens the telegram.

"Is madame not satisfied with me?"

Conscious of some inner warning, Lady Fitzmaurice speaks on an impulse. Perhaps she knows that, pretty, well-dressed, unscrupulous lady's-maids are so often dangerous to the peace of their mistresses.

"I am not entirely pleased with your conduct, Josephine. Your ability is unquestionable, but I have a fancy for a simple English servant who will serve me faithfully—now that I am married."

Perhaps Stephanie had detected her intrigues. As she stood, inexorable as Fate, in the shadow, a look of steady hatred dawned over the finely-cut, handsome features. Josephine hides herself, however, in the recesses of a large wardrobe, which has an inner door leading to the dressing-room.

"She will come to this room to sob, and I will listen," the lady's-maid mutters, after delivering the telegram into the hands of the groom.

Calmer since summoning Hafiz, Stephanie resolves to meet her danger coldly and cautiously. The blindness and folly of her passion for Lord Jasper are still so overwrought, she will welcome any crime, save murder, to retain his love.

Her lips are tightly drawn as she ascends to her bedroom, and opening a drawer, takes from it a small Florentine dagger, with a carved gold handle, which she sheaths in a case and attaches to her chain. Some instinct of self-preservation, perhaps, prompts this. Mdlle. Josephine sees this action, and draws her own conclusions.

And then Stephanie views her diamonds. She opens first one case and then another, lifting the gems and weighing them in her hand. A step on the stairs, and Lord Jasper, carrying a superb bouquet of hot-house flowers, is before her.

"Admiring your diamonds, are you, madame? Oh, you're a true woman; but see, darling, someone has sent you these lovely flowers. I saw them on the table below awaiting you, and brought them to you. I think you're quite in luck's way."

The grotesque irony of the words contrasting with her doom is more than she can bear, and she turns away her head.

"By Jove, Stephanie, this is, I think, the finest rose I ever saw."

She must say something, if only to gain time. These flowers are the commencement of her conflict and agony.

"The manager of the hotel," smiling indifferently, "begged me to accept them. They've had some grand banquet here, I fancy, last night."

As he draws a rose from her sister flowers Stephanie's eager, watchful eyes detect a tiny scroll of tissue paper drop from the stem on to the floor. She covers it with her foot till he again descends, and this is what she reads:

"Meet me to-night at eight o'clock at old Hove Church. Semper vigilans. E."

CHAPTER XIV.

WILL SHE COME?

What have I dared? Where am I lifted? How shall I descend and perish not!

MDLLE. JOSEPHINE remains in her safe recess in the wardrobe startled by the wildness in her mistress's manner, which more than ever convinces her of the existence of that "loose screw." Aaron is anxious to discover, and when the tiny scroll of paper flutters to Lady Fitzmaurice's feet, and Josephine sees the little buckled shoe trample it under foot as if it had the adder-like faculty of stinging, she is sure there are the makings of a very nice little sum of money for herself in the back-ground. Lady Fitzmaurice has read and re-read the words many times before dropping them into the flames.

How dear and familiar this writing had once been to her, and perhaps no woman ever forgets the memory of that first love, when every scrap

of paper touched with one hand, seems to have a sacred impress.

"He has the power to compel me to obey him," she thinks, as the ashes fall into the grate; "to darken all my future life. Shall I go, or shall I not?"

"To be or not to be," is the only query here again mooted.

"No," mutters Stephanie, preparing to descend, "I have resolved to defy him and I will remain here."

Lord Jasper, down below waiting for his luncheon, is drawing some tickets out of his breast coat pocket for the theatre, and as Stephanie enters, having changed her dress of pale pink for one of velvet, throws them over to her and smiles.

"They have a capital company here at the 'Excelsior,'" he says, as the waiter places a silver soup tureen on the table. "I thought you would enjoy the change. I met two or three fellows from my club at the Bedford, and they will join us."

Suppose the unseen enemy should present himself here in the event of her not meeting him at the appointed place? All may be saved if she can be quite certain Lord Jasper will be away at the theatre with his friends, herself remaining at the hotel.

"It will be no pleasure to me, dear, to join your party to-night," lifting her pale, worn face. "I feel too seriously ill to think of it. What I long for is a quiet evening all alone."

He rests his hand upon her sunny hair.

"That means, my wife, you will not be sorry to lose my restless self for one evening. You shall have your wish."

"Headaches always last a whole day with me when they come on after breakfast," indifferently. "Harry Sinclair, Moriarty, and Fred Maitland are all down here, and we'll go together. I don't mean, however to be late home."

Some relief and feeling of security are making themselves distinctly felt. Stephanie sips her soup languidly, and after trifling with an entrée, retires to her room to rest. Her husband goes off to see his friends, and on returning finds her lying down, a bottle of Eau de Cologne by her side, and Mdlle. Josephine in attendance.

"These fellows want me to dine at the Bedford, Stephanie. Would you think me very selfish to leave you now that you're ill?"

She raises herself on her elbow.

"Dear Jasper, it worries me to think you must be alone downstairs without me. Go by all means, but kiss me first and darken the blinds more. Thanks, that is delightful. If I feel better I may have out the ponies for a drive."

"Au revoir, then, darling."

Kissing her delicate cheek, he descends the hotel stairs, first drawing a small flower from the bouquet on the dressing-table, which he places in the button-hole of his coat.

"Saved!" cries Stephanie, from amid her pillows, and blessing Providence for what may prove an escape from ruin.

There is someone else who smiles too, the other side of the bed; this is Mdlle. Josephine, folding out the frills of her ladyship's pale pink dress ere consigning it to the wardrobe.

"My drops, Josephine," pointing to a small phial on the mantelpiece, on which was written, "Relief from headache instantly guaranteed."

"I feel as if a nice long sleep will do me good."

The lady's-maid is determined her mistress shall sleep soundly. She nearly doubles the allotted dose. Stephanie, grasping the glass eagerly, swallows the mixture.

Hour after hour passes, still she sleeps on; the fading daylight falls upon the room, and the lovely woman is still asleep in the sombre shadows.

About eight o'clock Lady Fitzmaurice wakes from her sound slumbers with a piercing scream.

"No, no!" she cries, wildly, half asleep and half awake. "I will come to you. Do you not know me? I am here."

"Is madame having a sad dream?" asks Josephine, by her side. "And tians! Madame

as slept long; ah, so long. It is now eight o'clock."

Eight o'clock! Stephanie has listened to these words in her dream; for she resolved ere sleeping to obey the invincible messenger, and be at Hove old church at the appointed hour. Her eyes are glassy and feverish, but she no longer trembles; to-night will, she believes, settle everything. Dressing herself hastily, she descends to the drawing-room, orders some strong, black coffee, and taking up a book, endeavours, but vainly, to read. If this fateful evening passes over in silence the bird of prey will have relinquished his schemes and plots. Does she not know him so well of old?

Meanwhile the man on crutches wends his way to the church, and steals around the lonely graves in the dusky twilight waiting for Stephanie. He has thrown his crutches aside, and the green shade is now hanging round his neck, and taking from his pocket a small leather case, he lights a cigar, which he presently throws away in disgust and lights another.

"I wonder whether her ladyship will be inclined to obey me to-night," he thinks, dragging up small tufts of grass from the rusty foliage.

He takes out his watch and glances at the hour.

"By heaven! She means to defy me then, that's clear, and maybe her husband—good gracious, why, I'm her husband, though—has appeared when he's been least wanted, and spoilt our little meeting. And what a lonely old place this is; so dismally grand, and like my luck, discords again—a dreadfully twangy bell, marshalling the excellent folks to a somewhat late service, for it's past eight. Well, my pet, if you won't come to me I must go to you, and I think that will bring you to terms pretty quickly. Come, I'll give her another quarter of an hour, though."

To while away this exceptionally mauvais quart d'heure he whistles cheerfully, rather too cheerfully, perhaps, for a hooked-nosed individual, presenting the appearance of a sexton and broker combined, emerged from behind a tombstone, and looked hard at the man on crutches.

"I say, young man, do you know where you are? You're among the consecrated bones of the dead."

"That be blowed, then," says the stranger, rising quickly, and almost forgetting his crutches. "I'm lame, you see, wounded in Mexico, but I try and keep a cheerful frame of mind."

"You seem to have a wonderfully correct ear," the man says, more affably, as he meets the other's smile.

"Now, that's strange, for I'm a little deaf, and my eyesight is seriously affected," says the individual on crutches, limping a little, rather glad to move on. "I've been an old soldier for years, and that's a wearing life."

The hook-nosed man looks disappointed at this, but so perfect is the other's "get up" (even the tones of his voice are changed), Aaron is for once taken in.

"That Punch and Judy man was a rascal; he's thrown me off the scent, he has, and no mistake. I must look farther afield for Jabez Cohen," he mutters.

"Good-night, sir," says the wounded hero, limping onwards, and very glad to leave the churchyard behind.

He is soon on the Brighton pavement; the sea, soft and calm as a lake, is rippling in against the shore with faint, bell-like sweetness; he shades his eyes with his hand, and glances over the obscure shades of the ocean. He will see her again. The woman to whom he once whispered vows of tenderest homage—the woman whom he has so long deserted, and whom he married when she was a child.

"It's to be hoped she's alone," he thinks. "For I've a particular wish to run dark, and if we can arrange an amicable settlement regarding the money, why then my pretty little wife can idolise her new husband as much as she pleases—undisturbed by me. I'm very philosophical under all circumstances."

His expression changes as he mounts the broad steps of the Crescent Hotel, and his bold eyes glance rapidly on either side to be sure he is unperceived.

"Can you tell me, my friend, if Lady Jasper Fitzmaurice is alone this evening?" he says, entrapping a hare-brained young waiter into conversation who was passing one of the windows.

"She is, sir," the man says, modestly, clawing half-a-crown.

"Well, then, say her brother has returned from Mexico, and wishes to see her for a few minutes."

He waits in the coffee-room of the hotel till the waiter returns.

"If you please, sir, Lady Fitzmaurice is alone, and will see you. Yes, turn to the left, and it's the first door, number thirteen, on the right."

He does not see her at first as he enters, then a dark form emerges from the recess by the window, and puts up a warning hand.

"So you dare to come after me here."

He laughs—his old, defiant laugh.

"Better drop the high and mighty, eh, madame, all things considered."

He sinks into a chair as he speaks, and beckons her to his side.

"Well, this is a nice welcome for a loving husband, upon my soul."

She represses a shriek as he advances, and lays his hand on her shoulder; the bright flash of steel meets his eyes.

"Lay but one finger on me, Evelyn, and I will kill you and myself after!" she says, hoarsely.

"And, by Jupiter, she means it too," he says, under his breath, falling back a few paces.

"Countess de Remolles, or rather as you are pleased to call yourself, Lady Stephanie Fitzmaurice, you know I can lead you a very ugly dance, don't you, in the future? You are still the slave of my will. Take care lest I—"

threateningly. She sinks on her knees before him, clasping her hands.

"Mercy, mercy, Evelyn!" she says, faintly; "anything but threats. Spare me, Evelyn; let me lead my new happy life with the husband I adore."

The count laughs and tosses back his hair.

"Husband! My dear child, don't confuse this little matter. I happen to be that lucky individual, for I am the Count de Remolles."

He lifts his hand as he speaks—a fine, delicate hand, with something cruel in its perfect, symmetrical modelling.

"I thought you were dead," she says, wildly. "I heard and I read you were killed in a duel. Vichy swore to me at the opera the last time I was in Paris that you were dead."

"Oh, he'd swear anything for an omelette or bottle of wine, and so I am dead, and buried to a pretty tune, and I want to live again. Money, my sweet countess, is all I have come to claim of you, and money—nothing else—in the price of my silence."

She sets her teeth with a hard, firm click, and her hand strays to the dagger sheathed at her side. Presently she asks:

"How much?"

The count reflects, and brings his white hand slowly down on the table's edge.

"Four thousand pounds!"

"But will that end it, Evelyn? Will that be the last claim? Shall I be followed, threatened, hunted down, driven out of my mind?"

"You're a beautiful body, my dear, but I never thought you'd any mind," he says, in his slow, drowsy way. "You Circassian doves never have; and how's your voice? You're handsomer than ever. I wonder if you weep as much now as when I married you?"

"I was but a child, Evelyn. Allah himself could never have punished me for my folly in loving you. I was but a child."

Her voice dies away to a whisper, and she paces the room feverishly before him.

"What recent crimes have you plunged into, Evelyn? What further misery have you wreaked on the helpless?"

"I've got myself into rather a tiresome scrape, Stephanie," he says, in a tone of assumed levity; "but the sum of money you will give me will enable me to get out of all further worry, and you shall be left in peace for ever, I swear it."

"You have long lost all love for me."

"Yes, fortunately. One woman always seemed to me as good as another, or, as an American actor says, 'Perhaps better,' provided she's young and fresh and that sort of thing. I seem to be a figure of doom to one very noble family though. A wife of the Fitzmaurice's clothes with me, and my wife marries a Fitzmaurice. There's a pretty piece of domestic melodrama with a vengeance."

"Good heavens! I hear a step on the stairs!" she cries, listening eagerly. "If he and you should meet I am lost for ever."

"Or I might settle him in a duel," says Evelyn, rising; but he has decidedly no wish to encounter Lord Jasper.

"It is his voice!" cries Stephanie. "Fly! the window is open, and it is but two feet from the ground. Remember, Evelyn, if he finds you here, I am ruined, and you will gain nothing."

The Count de Remolles gently throws up the window, and drawing his crutches after him, steps nimbly to his feet. It is a performance he has often effected very gracefully on the stage.

"Good-bye, my dear wife," he says, lightly, kissing his finger-tips, "and remember the price of my silence—four thousand pounds!"

(To be Continued.)

LOU'S LETTER.

"WHERE are you going, Louise?"

Mrs. Benson looked up from her sewing, and Louise paused with her hand on the door-knob.

"To the office to post my letter," Louise answered, sullenly.

"To whom are you writing, dear?"

"To Dan."

"To Dannie? Why, I would like to read your answer to him. And then I have some word of my own to add."

"You can write again," said Louise, turning to leave the room. "My letter is sealed now."

"You can put it in another envelope, Louise. I have but a few words to add. It will not detain you long."

"I really cannot wait, mamma. I am afraid that I shall be too late as it is."

"Louise!" Mrs. Benson spoke sternly, and Louise knew there was no use for further parleying. "Louise, I must see your letter before you send it!"

The girl tossed the letter into her mother's lap, and sat in moody silence while Mrs. Benson broke the seal and read the bitter, cruel lines intended for the absent brother. The mother read slowly, and Louise thought she must be committing the letter to memory, she was so long in reading it.

At last, when the clock on the mantelpiece seemed to have ticked off hours instead of minutes, Mrs. Benson broke the silence with a deep sigh; and Louise, looking up, saw a white face bathed in tears. Frightened out of her anger the girl threw her arms about her mother's neck and cried:

"Oh, mamma, mamma! what have I done? What is the matter?"

There was no answer for a moment; and then the mother, smoothing the hair back from the girl's forehead, and gazing down into the young face, replied:

"Your letter reminds me of one which I wrote to your Aunt Clara years ago, Louise, when I was a girl at home, and she was away teaching school. I was so touchy and high-tempered then as you are now, and every bit as ready to take

offence. I was invited to a party, and wrote to Clara to send me some little article of finery. I forget just what it was, but I remember that it did not amount to much. But I had my heart set on having it for that party; and when day after day went by and brought no letter from Clara, until the party-day arrived, and I knew all hope was over for my finery, I just sat down and wrote the bitterest, most cruel letter that I could write.

"And, Louise, that letter was the last word that Clara received from home. She had been ill for some time; but, thinking lightly of her illness, and not wishing to disturb and worry us with bad news, she had suffered on, soon hoping to be well soon, until the day on which my letter reached her. The woman with whom she was boarding said that Clara had seemed depressed and homesick all day; and when the noon mail brought a letter from home she had seized it eagerly.

"For now I will talk to my home-folks, and that will make me feel better," she said. "But," the woman added, when telling me of Clara's illness, 'the letter did not seem to cheer her up any, and I thought maybe she had got bad news. Her fever grew worse, and we sent for you folks; but it was too late then. We ought to have sent sooner.' When we reached Clara she was dead. That is my story, dear; and now, if you want to send this letter to your brother, you may do so; but remember that the remorse of a whole lifetime cannot undo an unkindness."

Louise left her mother and stole quietly to her own room; and there, on her knees, she prayed the Father to remove all anger and bitterness from her heart. Then she wrote to her brother a kind, cheery letter, full of encouragement, home news, and home fun. It comforted the mother's heart with the thought that her bitter lesson had not been in vain, that through her suffering Louise was spared. And to Dannie, away at school, longing unspeakably for his home, it carried the pure, joyous breath of home, and was a kind hand leading upward.

F. F.

A RUSSIAN HERO;

OR,

Marko Tyre's Treason.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE suite of rooms which had been assigned to our heroine in the Winter Palace was of course sufficiently magnificent.

These apartments occupied an intermediate space between the private quarters of the empress and the abode of the servants and officials in general, it having been the purpose of Catherine not merely to treat Roda with distinguishing honour, but also to have her so near that Marko could not be too much in the presence of his betrothed unknown to the sovereign.

A busy and eventful day was over, with all its cares and vexations, and Roda had retired to her private parlour, with a countenance sufficiently indicative of the fact that she had not found her life at court a bed of roses.

"You are not well to-night, mistress?" said Mrs. Plefsky, with the abrupt freedom permitted a favourite attendant. "I well foresaw how it would be. What with all these late hours and constant turmoil, the light is already fading from your eyes, and the wonted elasticity from your steps!"

"And yet I am very happy here," returned Roda, smiling. "It is so good to be near General Tyre! The empress is very good to us all, and seems to be constantly studying how to make me contented. Has she not been like a mother?"

"It may seem so to you, mistress," answered Mrs. Plefsky. "But I should very soon tire of

being hurried about in this fashion. You have hardly had an hour to yourself since you came here. But what am I thinking about?" added the faithful woman, with an accent of self-reproach. "Now that the chance is offered us, Mouska and I will get you to bed, in the hope that you will obtain refreshing slumbers!"

"No, I will not retire now," said our heroine, "but you may all leave me. I am expecting General Tyre!"

"We can wait till he comes," observed Mouska, whose sympathetic face showed that she, too, had detected signs of the wearing effects of life at court upon her revered mistress.

"No, you may leave me now," said Roda, wearily. "I wish to be alone."

The usual adieux were at once exchanged, and Mouska and the rest retired to their own apartments.

"They are right," murmured Roda, as she arose and began walking softly to and fro in the midst of the elegance and grandeur by which she was surrounded. "This life is exhaustive. I can see for myself, by the simplest glance into a mirror, that it is telling upon me. And what is still more significant, I do not feel as well as I did at home. What means the strange languor that is stealing over me? I have been up a little later nights perhaps than at home, but I have lain abed correspondingly late in the morning, and the change in my hours ought not to make such a difference in my feelings. It really tires me to take the exercise I am now taking."

Returning to her seat she picked up a volume of history, and endeavoured to forget herself in the scenes and events of other days there depicted, but at the end of a brief interval she closed the book and returned it to its place, with a more audible sigh than she had before uttered.

"Even my mind seems to have lost its force and application," she murmured. "At this rate I shall soon be alarmed."

There came a gentle knock upon the door opening into one of the great corridors of the palace, and Marko entered.

The meeting of the lovers was as tender as joyful, but it was with a great sigh that our hero sank into a chair.

"Well, how has the day passed with you, Roda?" he asked. "Been as happy as ever—as busy?"

"Oh, yes—I suppose so," replied our heroine, with a sigh. "Everybody seems to make a great deal of me. I have numerous visitors. All the great dignitaries of the empire have called upon me already. I am sure there is nothing to complain of. The empress continues as good as she can be."

"And yet there seems to be a shadow upon your face. You have had no annoyance or troubles, I suppose?"

"Certainly not."

"But you have had lots of admirers," proceeded Marko, as he placed his hand under the girl's chin and drew her face up to his own, kissing her repeatedly. "I hear that all the young magnates of the court have their heads turned by your loveliness. They wonder where you have been all your days that they have not seen you sooner. I have been as proud as a prince to note the commotion you have created."

The face of our heroine brightened under his glances of affectionate admiration.

"And you, Marko," she murmured, as she threw herself into his arms, "are you happy here? Do you like to be at court?"

"Well, I have been so busy that I have hardly had time to ask myself what I do think about all these matters," was the answer. "A strange world, isn't it?"

"Very strange, indeed! Of all those ladies and gentlemen who have been here to welcome me to court, how many are really glad to see me? How many are sincere in their congratulations?"

"I see by your questions that your experience has been mine," said Marko. "The whole thing's as hollow as a gourd! Fair faces and

envious or malicious hearts! Glitter and show to any extent, and not a particle of that heart-rest and soul-substance without which our lives are a mockery! The slave and the prince are equally removed from happiness. The golden mean is even more desirable in our social station than anywhere else. For my part, as novel and fascinating as everything has been since my advent into the dazzling light of imperial favour, I have not been at all enchanted. To the contrary, I have seen a great deal that has set me to thinking. Were you not here at this moment," and he embraced her with yearning tenderness, "I should feel like a hermit!"

"I don't believe we were naturally adapted to court life," said Roda. "We are too serious, too true to our convictions, too well supplied with better treasures than life at court can give us. How I would like to be in my dear old room at home at this moment, and see the dear old faces around me, and feel that no one was seeking to harm us, or telling falsehoods about us, or seeking to oust us from our places! I am satisfied already that I have no call or inclination to remain here. The court is not for such as us, Marko. We cannot fall into its ways any more than we can change them. We must either yield to the stream or be buried beneath it. Suppose we run away?"

Marko laughed heartily at the half serious suggestion.

"Her majesty would regard us as a couple of babies if she should overhear us," he said. "But I am more than half inclined to believe that we are not so well pleased with our surroundings as we might be. Isn't that said in regular court language?"

"Oh, you keep on as you are going and you will soon be a diplomat fit to send to the Sultan!" exclaimed Roda. "To be serious, how proud I am of you! What a lion you are among all these insects and reptiles! If I wasn't free to love you just as much as I please, I should be perfectly distracted. And to think that you are all mine, and that none of these beautiful and titled ladies will ever make the least impression upon you, isn't it delightful?"

"Speaking of making an impression," said our hero, gravely, "what do you think of the friendship of the empress for us?"

"Think of it? Why?"

"Does she ever say anything to you about me?"

"Not a word, Marko. She only talks to me of court this, and baron that, and marshal so and so. She seems to want me to make a great and brilliant match, and to marry me off as quickly as possible. She has already recommended to me half a dozen suitors, each better than the other."

The face of Marko lost its half-jesting expression, and became suddenly grave.

"And what do you suppose her majesty's advice is to me, dear?" he asked.

"I couldn't guess, I am sure."

"Well, she tells me that a man of my character and destiny ought never to marry," communicated Marko. "She says I will always be a great commander, a representative to foreign courts, a diplomat for different missions, a wanderer, anything except a husband. She says I ought to live for ambition and glory, for the good of the empire and the human race generally. She says I have no more right to marry than has the Pope of Rome."

"And yet, all the while her majesty is talking in this way to us, Marko," breathed Roda, "she knows that we are engaged to each other."

"It is evident that she does not believe in the old proverb: 'What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.' She wants you to marry, and is equally sure that I ought to remain single. I ask you, therefore, what you think of her friendship?"

"Well, that doesn't look like square dealing," declared Roda. "The idea of my ever looking at any man except you, Marko. If you were not in existence, after what I know of love, I would never marry at all. The reasons that induce so many girls to marry, such as having a

home, could never apply to me. I shall always have my flowers and books and horses. But what is her majesty's motive in telling me one thing and you another? You must have some clue to this mystery? What is it?"

"I may as well tell you, I suppose," said Marko, gloomily, "although to tell you is to make you a sharer of my anxiety. As grand as is the character of the empress in many respects she is mad on the subject of love. She is capable of a sudden and fierce attachment, and is of course as quickly over it, going on to another. The number of lovers she has had during her reign would probably astonish you. They all reign a brief noon, and then vanish—as a rule—into perpetual night. Now, I am the last subject of her admiration. She had become attached to me for various services before my bold treason in saving your father, and before I killed those three Turks—before, in fact, she made you a baroness or me a colonel. But during the last few days she seems to be completely absorbed in her passion for me!"

"I—I have noticed the fact," said Roda.

"Our situation here is accordingly becoming grave and difficult," pursued Marko. "Perhaps it is high time that you should realise the facts in the case. The empress has made you a baroness, and thrown you into this scene, as one of her ladies of honour, in the hope and expectation that you will become giddy and be dazzled, and that you will marry count this, or baron that, or at least amuse yourself with all these flatteries and flirtations, and so gradually be weaned from me. On the other hand, she is advancing me rapidly from grade to grade, in the hope that she will at last inflame me with ambition, as a first step towards inspiring me with the tender passion. In a word, she expects me to tumble to her feet from the giddy height to which she has raised me!"

A look akin to a sense of peril gathered on Roda's fair countenance.

At this point of the conversation, a small secret panel at the back of one of the pictures ornamenting the walls of the room was noiselessly opened, and a face appeared at the aperture.

The face of the empress.

A glance at the stern lines of the imperial features would have announced with sufficient clearness that every word which had passed between the young couple had had Catherine for a hearer!

"In pursuance of her purpose," resumed Marko, after a pause, "the empress has called me into her private apartments at the most unreasonable hours, under pretence of consulting with me. You are aware of the existence and purpose of this ring," and he raised his hand, on one of the fingers of which still glittered this evidence of her majesty's regard. "I cannot, of course, lay it aside, as even such an act as that would be capable of turning all her majesty's affection to hatred. But I have, at the same time, taken good care not to make any use of it, allowing my negligence in this respect to be ascribed to the great pressure of duties and cares upon me. In a word, I have been obliged to feign an almost idiotic obtuseness in order to avoid an open rupture of her majesty's relations with me."

"Do we indeed stand upon such a ticklish foundation as this, Marko?" asked Roda, with a shudder of apprehension. "If so, we shall have to take some measure to avert the peril. Of course, if you are once driven to the wall you will have to tell her majesty that you can never, never love anyone except me, and that we are all the world to each other, and that you can never, never give her majesty a single thought beyond business and duty, and that you would sooner have my little finger than all the queens and empresses in creation."

"Yes, I shall have to tell her all this if she once gets me cornered; and, in that case, I will tell her, because it is all true," declared Marko, as he drew his betrothed to his heart, and rained kisses upon her sweet face. "I cannot tell you how disgusted I have been at having her majesty purring around me in this fashion. Why, she is old enough to be my mother!

What does she really know of love? The only true love is to have one nice little soul all to yourself, and to have your own true darling always, and to be so devoted to that one, so bound up in that one, that there is no possible temptation to have a single thought of another."

"Then we have found the one true love, dear Marko, for this is just the way we love each other." A happy silence fell between the couple as they exchanged caresses.

For a long time they canvassed their situation, happy in the present, but filled with misgivings about the future, and perceiving clearly that their life at court was soon to be beset by serious difficulties and troubles.

"Whatever happens we will be true to ourselves and to each other," was the conclusion at which Roda arrived. "I know nothing can weaken your love for me."

"Nothing, dear Roda! All the honours and riches and powers the empress could shower upon me are less in my sight than the least of the glances you have given me, or the least word you have uttered, since I entered this room!"

"That is just the way I feel about any effort that may be made to wean me from you, Marko," returned Roda. "I will be as true to you as the needle to the pole!"

Thus exchanging vows of tenderness and constancy, the lovers finally separated for the night at the door of Roda's apartment.

The secret panel closed abruptly. Was it a sigh or a groan that resounded beyond the walls of the apartment which had presented this exchange of happy thoughts and feelings? Or was it a muttered ejaculation of vengeance?

CHAPTER XXXVII.

It was really a difficult problem to which we left the captors of Gen. Gradowsky devoting their attention. Not one of the four thieves had a place of permanent and exclusive abode, and consequently not one of them was in a position to take the prisoner into his keeping.

"If I take him home with me," suggested Barnabel, "the old woman will want to know all about the general, and before bed-time she will be drunk and blabbing the secret all through the neighbourhood!"

"If I take him with me," declared Grousky, "I might as well enter his name on the register at the office of the chief of police!"

The statements of the other two ruffians were not a whit more favourable to the business in hand.

In his despair at the serious problem thus presented for solution, Grousky turned his gaze upon Gradowsky.

"Can't you suggest something, General?" he demanded.

"I am afraid my advice wouldn't be disinterested," replied Gradowsky, again smiling.

"Speak up, man!" cried Barnabel. "It strikes me that you have as much interest in the question as anyone. What shall we do with you?"

"You might fling me back into the sea," answered the general. "To be sure, that will not be a very pleasant solution for me, but it will be easy and final!"

The thieves expressed their disgust.

"We can, of course, keep him with us," said Grousky, "so long as we ourselves keep out of sight and hearing. But how long can we wander around in this manner? We ought to be at Misdrek's house at this very moment in order to make a haul."

"Spoken like a fisherman!" commented Gradowsky. "Suppose we all go back to the afore-said house? You can try to think of some better course of action as we go along."

"We've had enough of your suggestions, old man," answered Barnabel. "You seem to be making sport of our perplexity. Suppose, boys we—"

"Hush!" interrupted Grousky, in a whisper. "What is that coming up the Gulf? A boat of

some kind, isn't it? Lie down, General," he ordered, turning to the prisoner. "And look to your arms, boys. It may be that we shall have the police on our hands in another minute."

Gradowsky acted with such a will upon the injunctions he had received that he stowed himself almost out of sight under the boxes and packages the thieves had brought from Misdrek's.

"Sure enough," muttered Grousky, after an attentive look at the approaching object. "It's a boat of the harbour police, or something of that nature, and it's headed directly for us."

"Then we had better get out of its way if we can," said Barnabel, hurriedly. "To the oars."

The thieves lost no time in acting upon the supposed necessities of the case. There were two pairs of oars in the boat, and both were instantly in requisition. One of the other men steered, and the fourth kept up a sharp lookout, and from time to time gave his orders and suggestions in a low tone to his companions.

The boat was soon flying through the water at a high rate of speed, the guilty consciences of the fugitives lending every possible assistance, as well as every possible terror, to their flight.

"They have changed their course, too," announced the lookout, in tones of alarm, "and are coming directly in pursuit of us."

Gradowsky peered out from his concealment with the interest such a change in the situation was calculated to awaken. He saw that his safe-keeping was taken for granted, and every thought and energy of the thieves was given to their extrication from the possible danger into which they had so suddenly fallen.

"They're gaining upon us," resumed the lookout, after a brief pause. "Probably they are not so heavily laden as we are."

"It won't do for us to be caught with this plunder on our hands," declared Grousky, grimly. "Over with it!"

"And yet it can do us no harm," suggested Barnabel. "With or without the plunder, we shall lose our heads or be sent to Siberia for life, if we are overtaken, and especially if Gradowsky is found in our hands."

"But if we lighten the boat we need not be overtaken," cried another.

"Then over with the booty—and with the general also!"

"If we cannot do better."

The thieves strained every nerve in the race, but the lookout soon reported that the pursuers were gaining rapidly.

"Then lighten the boat!" ordered Grousky.

The prisoner was not only ready for this measure, but he had made up his mind to take his departure unassisted.

Even as the injunction last recorded resounded in his ears he slipped over the side of the boat into the water.

The act took the thieves by surprise, to say the least. They had not deemed it possible that a man in such a state of health would expose himself to such peril.

Nevertheless, it was no time for idle ejaculations of astonishment. Hastily emptying the boat of all its parcels and boxes, the thieves continued their wild flight, making another change in their course.

As Gradowsky came to the surface, after throwing himself out of the boat, he turned his face in the direction of the supposed pursuit, with the intention of calling as loudly as possible for assistance.

He had seized one of the lightest boxes in the boat at the moment of throwing himself overboard, and he now found that he had not been mistaken in supposing that this support, as frail as it was, would amply suffice to keep him from drowning. He floated, with his head out of water.

But what a shock was now given him! By the glare of the waves, as utilised from the position he was in, he could see that there was

no boat in pursuit of the thieves—no second boat whatever.

The object they had seen was simply a dark puff of fog driven before the wind, and rolling and wriggling according to the vagaries of the impelling forces.

Thus the thieves were flying from the imaginary foe, and the general had trusted himself to the waves in the hope of being picked up by a boat that was now seen to have no existence.

The discovery was horrible. For a moment he was almost paralysed by it. Then he was tempted to call to the thieves with all the strength of his lungs, with the intention of enlightening them in regard to their error, and of calling them back to his assistance.

But they were already at such a distance from him, thanks to their terror, and were making so much noise among themselves, that it is doubtful if he could have made them hear him.

Another thing—his own situation claimed his instant attention. If Gradowsky had failed to perfect himself in the art of swimming—and it is astonishing how many men who have always lived near the water or upon it, have failed to gain that very valuable knowledge—he had not failed to learn what a very small piece of wood will support a stout man whose body is mostly submerged.

He realised, therefore, the instant he had gathered around him as many of the boxes thrown overboard by the thieves as he could manage, that he was in no danger of immediate drowning. These materials would certainly afford him an occasional resting-spell, if they were not buoyant enough to offer him as complete a support as he could have desired.

He was thus independent, in a measure, of the thieves, and he preferred his present peril to those the renewal of his captivity was likely to bring upon him. He accordingly kept silent.

As near as he could judge, there was reason to hope that the winds and waves would soon cast him upon the friendly shore which he knew was not far distant.

And so, realising all the facts in his favour, as well as all the dangers by which he was menaced, the general struck out for his life as manfully as possible.

The materials he had accumulated being too light to support him, when his head and shoulders were exposed, he was obliged to keep his face so near the surface that it was almost constantly drenched by the waves, but the result of his exertions was all he had anticipated.

If he was often drenched by the rushing billows, he did not fail to get from time to time a long breath of pure air, and he was even able, by treading the water with his feet—which was the nearest approach he had ever made to swimming—to maintain himself in good wind and heart, in the very worst instances of the deadly peril by which he was menaced.

And thus it was that Gradowsky drifted away before the winds and the currents—in the direction of the shore, as he hoped and prayed so earnestly.

"They are all gone now," was his mental ejaculation, when all sounds of the thieves had died out of his hearing. "If a ship or a boat were to come near me now, I could call for assistance. In any and every case there is a chance for me. Oh, won't those rascals be astonished to see me appear in court against them for this night's work, when they suppose me to have become the prey of fishes?"

At this thought of fishes, the general naturally thought of sharks. But as almost everything has its compensations, no sooner had he thought of those terrors of the Baffin than he reflected that he must be nearer to the shore than they are in the habit of coming.

"Perhaps I can touch bottom!" he ejaculated, after a long struggle.

He made the attempt, extending his feet downwards, but the measure only imperilled his hold of his boxes, there being still several fathoms of water beneath him.

"There are certainly shoals" all along this

shore," he said to himself, as Marko had done on a similar occasion—the same peril producing the same thoughts, "and some of them are more or less uncovered at low water. I will keep looking for one."

Acting upon this thought he sounded from time to time, notwithstanding all the perils and inconveniences of the act, and at length he was gloriously and startlingly rewarded.

His feet came in contact with a hard bottom. He knew that he had reached one of the shoals with which his thoughts and hopes had for a few moments been so busy.

Standing erect upon these newly-discovered foundations his whole head and shoulders were raised above the general level of the waves.

Gathering his boxes around him, and bracing himself against the sweep of the waves, he was able to resume his full breathing—to rest from his arduous exertions—in short, to take a new lease of life.

It was clear to him that he had gained a great point of his case in gaining that secure footing. Should the tide be going out he could not fail to feel that his safety was virtually assured.

With what poignant interest he watched and waited!

Ere long the one great fact he was so anxious about was decided. The tide was going out! His shoulders were being gradually uncovered.

Reassured of this favouring circumstance, he began sounding around him, using his feet for that purpose, and soon discovered that the water deepened rapidly in every direction from the spot upon which he was standing, saving in one direction—that of the shore.

Realising that he had reached the extreme outer point of a shoal, he moved slowly along the dangerous route thus afforded him, sounding with his feet at every step.

He assured himself now that he would soon reach the dry sand. It seemed to him that the outlines of the shore had already become visible through the thick darkness.

But just as he had reached this comforting conclusion he reached the end of the shoal. Deep water was now before him as well as beside and behind him.

Halting, he debated as to his course, sighing profoundly. Having once found footing, it became intensely disagreeable to go drifting again at the mercy of the winds and waves, but there seemed no help for it.

There was a keen chill in the night air—a constantly increasing coldness in the water. He was not only shivering violently, but had become conscious of the fact.

"I shall perish here," he thought. "I shall have to push off again."

He was about to act upon this conviction, when he was startled by the thuds of a boat moving rapidly through the water in the very teeth of the wind.

This boat, as he saw at a glance, was close at hand, its white sail looming up distinctly in the darkness.

It had left the shore he had been so anxiously endeavouring to reach, and was following a course that could not fail to bring it within a few rods of him. The joy of this discovery was beyond expression.

"Help! help!" he shouted.

(To be Continued.)

THE LOVE OF MONEY.

The love of money is not a simple disposition to acquire wealth. That arises from man's power to project his thoughts into the future and to provide for disability and old age. It is rather commendable than blameworthy. The Bible nowhere condemns it. Indeed, in the Old Testament we read that riches, consisting of cornfields, vineyards and olive yards, were promised those who walked in the ways of truth and probity. The New Testament also, though very emphatic on the dangers of wealth, says

not a word against its acquisition by proper means, or its possession, if rightly used.

The love of money is pronounced "the root of all evil," or, perhaps more strictly rendered, the root of all kinds of evil. This is a sordid thirst of gain as a possession merely, and not as a power to be used for the glory of God and the good of men. It increases with the increase of wealth, crying, "More, more," like the horse-leech and the grave. "This disposition," says another, "becomes first a kind of intemperance, and then, like intemperance, it becomes a disease, and finally a species of insanity." Its first manifestation is a tenacity to hold money; its second is to use it for no other purpose than to increase it; its last is to regard it only as capital to be invested for the sake of its interest, and to regard the interest as intended only to be turned again into capital.

This disposition grows insensibly upon a person. For years, if not for a lifetime, he has not the slightest suspicion that he comes under the tremendous malediction of Paul in the sixth chapter of his First Epistle to Timothy. When he discovers that some of his uncharitable neighbours are classifying him with the lovers of money, he deludes himself by saying, "They are ignorant of my plans. When I have amassed a large fortune, I mean to endow colleges, erect orphan asylums, support hospitals and pour streams of gold into the treasury of the church." Under such a delusion, even good men rob God for years and injure their own souls.

This disposition not only grows insensibly, but eats up all the vitality of the soul. It cools its warm currents, and kills its noblest sensibilities. It renders it suspicious of the value of success of any measure or undertaking that has not for its end the coining of money. It casts around it an encrustation of earth that keeps its aloof from all the benign and softening influences of society. It clips its wings and keeps it tied down to the dust of earth. It leaves nothing for it to enjoy with its wealth when it has acquired it. It has consumed everything else.

The love of money plunges a man into moral evils of the most destructive kind. According to the teaching of the Apostle, it exposes him to temptation. It tends to make him untruthful. The love of money exposes a man also to dishonesty. If he is a merchant, he is tempted to give short weights and measures, to adulterate his goods, or to make false entries, when he gives credit, justifying it on the ground of small profit in consequence of competition. If he is a banker or broker, he is tempted to take advantage of the crippled condition of the borrower, or to press too hard the man whom he knows to be in his power. If he is a real estate owner, he is tempted to extort the last penny from the poor tenant and to oppress even the widow and the orphan. If he is the manager of other men's estates, he is tempted to run up a long list of expenses that are purely imaginary, for the sake of filling his coffers.

The man who exposes himself to temptation is almost sure to fall into a snare. Before he knows it, he finds his foot fast in its snare. It is an easy step from exposure to temptation into a snare. An opportunity of realising a large sum of money opens before him. There is the temptation. Having no money of his own to secure the coveted prize, he uses the means of others lying idle in his hands, or in the vault to which he has access, without their knowledge or consent, in the hope of replacing it after securing a handsome sum for himself.

Here is the snare. He soon finds that his calculations were faulty and that ruin stares him in the face. Though he is not so sure of success the second time, yet necessity is laid upon him to throw for the saving prize. He resorts to more desperate measures, as false entries, perjury and the like. But he only gets more and more entangled, until he finds himself beating his once generous breast against the sides of an iron cage.

When fairly caught in the snare and striving to extricate himself, he is liable to fall "into many foolish and hurtful lusts." Whilst he has possession of money he often indulges in extravagance—in a costly dwelling, expensive

furniture, sumptuous feasts, elegant equipages, munificent presents and princely displays. He easily glides from these foolish to hurtful lusts." As his condition grows dangerous and desperate, he resorts to the intoxicating cup to strengthen his nerves and brace him for the struggle. He is led, by an awful secret he durst not divulge to his wife, to the company of the dissipated and reckless, and with them goes down to the gates of Hades. All this beclouds the intellect, creates suspicions as to his habits and precipitates his terrible ruin.

RUSSIAN PEASANT CHILDREN.

In the life of a Russian peasant there is a period anterior to all tunics, mantles, and even sheepskins; during which they lead a kind of mummy life. only, unlike the Egyptian, it is the first instead of the last stage of their existence. For the youngest children are always swaddled and rolled up tight in bandages, so that they may be conveniently put away without risk of getting themselves into mischief or danger.

On entering one of their houses, an enthusiastic traveller thinks he has come upon some Pagan tribe, having their idols and penates, with the heads well carved out and the rest of the body left in block. He looks curiously at one laid upon a shelf, another hung to the wall on a peg, a third swung over one of the main beams of the roof, and rocked by the mother, who has the cord looped over her foot.

"Why, that is a child!" cries the astonished traveller, with a feeling similar to that experienced on treading upon a toad which was supposed to be a stone.

"Why, what else should it be?" answers the mother.

Having learned so much in so short a time, the inquisitive traveller wishes to inform himself about the habits of the creature; but his curiosity being somewhat dampened by the extreme dirt of the little figure, he inquires of the parent when it is washed.

"Washed!" shrieks the terrified mother; "washed—what, wash a child? You would kill it!"

The ladies of Detroit have taken madly to the bicycle; the reason given is that it is fast and they can dress in breeches.

Plans for the naval barracks which are to be erected near the Portsmouth Hospital are in course of preparation, but only a vote £5,000 on account is taken in this year's estimates.

"Where you ever in a court of justice before?" asked a magistrate of a witness who was recently conducting himself in an unseemly manner. "No, never," replied the man, "but I have often been up before the magistrate."

People are so much dissatisfied with their recent Easter holidays, on account of the atrociously bad weather that prevailed, that it has been seriously proposed to put off Easter in future—civilly, of course, not ecclesiastically—till the leafy month of June. The proposal is in many respects a sensible one.

The new Law Courts in the Strand were estimated to cost £1,750,000, and they have been in course of building over ten years. One portion of this vast unfinished temple of justice was opened for business on April 21, and the whole group of Courts may be finished within three years, if there be no repetition of strikes.

One of the somewhat numerous fraternity of London astrologers thought that he would like to work Mr. Gladstone's horoscope, and wrote for the exact hour of birth. Mr. Gladstone courteously but firmly declined, in a few brief lines, to furnish the particulars. Would it be credited that in London, during the present year of grace, astrologer's "businesses" are bought and sold as freely as though they were legitimate trading businesses.



[FOR THE NEXT DANCE.]

THE BUNCH OF VIOLETS.

LOUDLY rang the bell at Mrs. Evans' door, one morning, and Maud Evans, peeping out, saw a small boy standing on the steps whom she seemed to recognise. Not waiting for Jane, the only servant in the establishment, Maud ran gaily down the stairs and opened the door.

"Please, ma'am, I was to give this to Miss Evans; you're she, ain't you?"

"Yes. Mr. Howard, your employer, sent you, I suppose?"

"Yes, miss. He said as how there was no answer."

"Very well."

Closing the door and running up to her room she opened the box, and, taking out an elegant bouquet of flowers, stood and looked at them with a tender look in the brown eyes, as if she were thinking more of the giver than gift.

"So he has come back," thought Maud, "and will be at the party to-night, since he sent me these; I wonder if he will repeat what he was going to say when we were interrupted."

Whatever the unfinished sentence was it must have been something very sweet to Maud, for she stood there turning the flowers round in her hand, with a happy look in the bright eyes, till she heard her mother call:

"Maud! Maud! Where are you, child? I wish you would come and help me with this head-dress; I want to wear it to-night."

Mrs. Evans was a widow. Her husband had died five years before, leaving her with one child, the Maud of my story.

People had thought Mr. Evans a wealthy man, but it was found after his death, when everything was settled, that his widow would have but a very limited income. She knew it would not go far in trying to keep up appearances and live in the manner in which they had been accustomed.

So, being a sensible woman, she had removed with Maud to a small cottage that had been left them out of the wreck, taking with them what was suitable of their furniture, and one servant, faithful Jane, who had been with them many years, and who declared she would never leave them.

They had many kind friends who did not leave them at their change of fortune. Colonel B—— and wife were attached friends, the colonel sending his carriage to take them to and from places of amusement, when they chose to attend, and the colonel's wife kindly matronised Maud whenever her mother was unable to go.

The party of which Maud had spoken was to be at the colonel's house that evening. They had been very gay, that winter, in M——, parties and balls following in succession. Maud had been to several, and had met Frank Howard, a young lawyer.

He had sought her society on every occasion, and was evidently in love with the little beauty.

The week before there had been a brilliant

party at a wealthy banker's. Maud had met Frank there, and they strolled into the conservatory together.

Standing there beside some curious tropical plant he had been telling her of, he felt such love for her surging up in his heart that he felt he must tell her—must know if his love was returned.

"Maud!" said he. She looked up quickly—looked up to encounter such a look of passionate love that her eyes sank beneath it. "Maud, do you know—" But the sentence was destined never to be finished, for into the conservatory bounced a young fop with tan-coloured hair and moustache. "And he was so delighted to find Miss Evans! Did she know the band was playing the waltz she had promised him?"

Young Howard glared as if he would like to annihilate him on the spot. Maud, feeling in no amiable mood, could do nothing but accept his proffered arm.

After that, there had been no opportunity for the pair to speak together alone that evening; but as Maud stood with several others, bidding their hostess good-night, Frank had, in answer to some invitation extended him, answered that he would be unable to attend, as he should be obliged to leave the city on business for a week.

When Frank returned from his business trip, he found invitations awaiting him to several merry-makings, and among them one for the party at Colonel B——'s that evening. He knew that Maud would be there, and, being rather an impatient young man, thought he would not risk another interruption, but would write and tell her of his love.

Seating himself at his desk he proceeded to indite the momentous epistle, and, after using about half a quire of paper, he at length had finished one. He told her how dearly he loved her; of how sweet the hope had been that he might call her "wife," and asking her, if she could return his love, to wear the bunch of violets he sent her in her hair that evening.

"I shall watch for these flowers, and shall learn my fate from them. If they are in your hair I shall know you return my love; if not—then God for ever bless and make you happy, darling, though I can never call you mine!"

Taking a box from his desk, he placed the letter and flowers in it, and, tying it tightly, called the boy whose acquaintance we have made on Mrs. Evans' steps.

"I want you to take this to Mrs. Evans' and inquire for Miss Maud; be sure you give it to no one else. You know where it is, don't you?"

"Yes, sir; any answer?"

"No," said Frank, absently thinking of the answer that Maud would perhaps give him that evening.

He knew she had always seemed pleased and happy when with him, and though not a conceited or vain man, he hardly thought her answer would be no.

But their love seemed destined not to run smoothly, for the note that would have made Maud so happy never reached her, and this was how it happened: The aforesaid small boy, having received the box, proceeded to carry it in the way boys invariably do, swinging it from side to side, wrong side up or any other way, it made no difference. Of course this one came to grief accordingly. Having one finger in the string tied around the box, he was swinging it to the best of his ability, at the same time gazing in open-mouthed admiration at a boy about his size who was pommelling one several degrees smaller on the opposite side of the street. Being occupied in looking at them, he did not see the ice on the walk, and consequently came down with a force that brought tears to his eyes.

Having sat there a moment rubbing his head with an injured expression of countenance, he gathered himself up and limped along to pick up the box. Now the string had slipped off the box, when Johnnie sat down with such force, and the poor little violets slid off the walk into the gutter, while the note, lying against the snow, did not attract his attention. Taking up the bouquet of flowers, he deposited them in the

box, and, tying the string securely round it, started off at a good round pace, arriving at Mrs. Evans' door without any further calamity befalling him.

A young man who was talking with some one had seen Johnnie's fall and espied the note. Picking it up, he called to Johnnie; but as that youth's heels were just disappearing around the corner, he did not hear.

The young man thrusting the note in his pocket, forgot all about it, being in a great hurry to catch the train, with only five minutes left in which to reach the station.

Ten o'clock saw Frank making his way through Colonel B—'s brilliantly lighted parlours. Looking eagerly around, he espied Maud, surrounded as usual by a crowd, for she had many admirers beside the young lawyer. He could only catch a glimpse of her now and then, so, standing quietly, he waited till the crowd parted and he was able to see her plainly. Looking, he could see no violets; he rubbed his eyes and looked again; but it did not improve his vision; there were certainly no violets in the bonny brown hair.

He stood there, feeling himself grow white and cold, till he was conscious that his face would tell strange tales if anyone accosted him. Turning, he left the room, going out on the veranda, and there sat and fought the bitter fight out. A less manly man would have blamed Maud, would have accused her of leading him on for her own amusement; but he loved her too well. He alone was to blame; he had thought it was love he read in the brown eyes raised so shyly to his; if she didn't love him, that was enough; he would never make her unhappy by alluding to it, but would try and be unselfish enough to be happy when he saw her so in some other man's love.

After a time he went back to the parlours, knowing he should be questioned as to his non-appearance if he did not.

Now Maud had seen Frank when he entered the rooms first, and missed him when he disappeared, wondering what had become of him.

When he entered the parlours again, she stood talking with someone. Looking at her as he passed, he said, "Good evening," and quietly passed on to where Miss Fenton stood, and Maud heard him ask her to dance.

Annie Fenton was a sunny little blonde, and Frank had paid her more attention than anyone else except Maud.

And now, when she saw them together, she thought, "What if, after all, he does not love me? He has acted strangely this evening. Possibly he is in love with Annie Fenton. It would be nothing very strange if he were. Men are ever fickle and changeable," with a bitter smile, and the wisdom of her eighteen years. "Not even to give me an opportunity to thank him for his flowers! But he seems completely infatuated with Annie Fenton," looking at Frank, who was bending in seeming devotion over the little blonde's chair. "But I will show him I can be as gay as he; he shall never know I love him."

So Maud danced and flirted, till you would have thought she was the happiest of the happy; but pride will do much, and pride upheld Maud till the weary party was at an end.

After that, Frank avoided every place where he was likely to meet Maud, and became morose and melancholy.

As for Maud, she went out as usual, but went in a listless fashion that had become habitual to her now, causing her mother much anxiety.

But if Maud was miserable, Frank was no less so, though he, having more to occupy his attention, did not feel it as keenly as she. Still, he was not feeling in a very cheerful mood, one morning, as he sat in his office, looking intently at the fire, and puffing at his cigar like a whole volcano, when suddenly the door was thrown open, and in rushed the stranger who had picked up the lost note.

"How are you?" he inquired, seizing Frank's hand and shaking it heartily.

"First rate," replied Frank. "When did you get back?"

"Oh, this morning; thought I would drop in and see how you were. Seems to me you're not looking remarkably jolly; what's the trouble? Lost your money, or has some one left you out of his will, or—" with a laugh, looking at his friend's gloomy face—"has some one refused you? Come, I guess I've hit it this time," he said, as his friend's face slightly flushed. "You were rather sweet on Miss Evans when I left. You may as well own up; has she refused you?"

Frank was naturally of a reticent nature, but he never could withstand Tom Lorimer. Why, he and Tom had known each other since the time they were roundabout jackets—had helped each other out of innumerable boy scrapes—had been room-mates at college, and, after graduating, had settled in the same place. What! not confide in Tom? It would be treason to the cause of friendship.

So, in answer to Tom's question if Maud had refused him, he answered that she had, relating the manner in which the proposal had been made.

"Well, I'm sorry for you," said Tom, when he had finished his story. "I have been doing a little in that line myself since I have been away, and can imagine how I should feel if her answer had been no instead of yes."

He then proceeded to relate to Frank how he had met his divinity, made fierce love to her and had been accepted; going into lover's raptures over her; to all of which Frank listened patiently.

"But I've her photograph here," taking it from his pocket, and handing it to Frank, and at the same time pulling out the lost note. "Hullo! I'd forgotten about this."

Turning it over several times, but not gaining much information from the blank envelope, he proceeded to open it.

Having perused a few lines he broke out with:

"I say, Frank, here's a go! Some one has been writing a declaration of love and lost it! Want to hear it?"

He then related how it came into his possession.

"Let me see it," said Frank, excitedly, a gleam of hope crossing his mind that it was his note to Maud.

When assured that this was really the case, he astonished his friend by jumping up, overturning his chair in his excitement, and demanding his hat and coat forthwith.

Johnnie, entering about this time, caused a pleasant little diversion. Frank pounced upon him, asking what he meant by doing errands in such a manner?

While Tom tried to impress upon the mind of the bewildered youth the awful retribution that would surely overtake him if he did not own up and tell the truth.

But Johnnie protested he had carried the box all right; he owned he had fallen and the flowers rolled out.

"But I picked 'em up," snivelled Johnnie, "and gave 'em to the young lady all right."

Frank was too happy to be very unforgiving toward the delinquent, so, after delivering a short lecture on carelessness, he told him that he would overlook it this time, if he would be more careful in the future.

That evening found Frank ringing the bell at Mrs. Evans' door.

Jane ushered him into the parlour, where Maud sat.

She had not heard the door open, and was quite startled when a manly voice at her side said:

"Maud!"

She started up with a glad cry as she saw Frank, and he needed no other assurance than the happy, blushing face that his love was returned.

Stretching out his arms to her she went straight into them, and as he folded them around her he knew that for him the winter of his discontent had ended at last in a glorious summer.

H. R.

SELLING THE PROFESSOR.

ALTHOUGH the young rascal stole the idea, the method of its application was none the less pat and effective. Many of us may remember the old Scotchman's outlook of wondrous vision on his native coast, but we can enjoy all the same the humour of the following, which happened in Newcastle last year:

Mr. Landor, Professor of Philosophy and Natural History of the Newcastle Seminary, was in the habit of walking out, with such members of his classes as cared to go with him, for purpose of observation and study of natural science. One day he stood upon the towering crest of the Swallows' Cliff, overlooking the boundless stretch of the broad Atlantic; the larger part of his best class in chemistry and natural history was with him—perhaps eight or ten of them—youths from fourteen to seventeen years of age—who enjoyed his teaching, despite his disposition to oddity and occasional crustiness.

He was willing to be questioned, but never willing to be disputed; and though one of the kindest and most gentle of men, and ready at all times to make personal sacrifice for the good of those under his charge, he was nevertheless exceedingly dictatorial, and prone to look upon the young gentlemen confided to his tutorage as so many human machines which he alone could regulate and operate.

They had been walking slowly, conversing upon various topics suggested by objects in their way, and the day was near its close when they reached the summit of the cliff. The sun was already sinking behind the distant hills and forests at their backs, and the great ocean wore a look grand and solemn.

Not far away was a sail; a little farther was another; and against the dim horizon, in the far distance, were distinguishable two or three white specks whose canvas was visible while the hulls bearing it were hidden from sight by the convexity of the earth's surface. The professor pointed to the distant sails, and asked his pupils how far down the cliff they would have to descend in order to lose sight of them. Not very far, they thought.

"Certainly not," said the tutor.

And then he launched forth upon the subject of the powers of human vision, especially as connected with objects seen over the ocean.

"Look ye, young gentlemen," he said, with a strong touch of the dictatorial and grandiloquent in his style. "What do you fancy to be the utmost stretch of human vision—I mean, looking over the ocean? That is," he added, as he noticed the hesitation of his pupils, "at what distance, if any, do you imagine an object would fail to impress the retina and the optic nerve?"

Dick Marble, a keen-eyed, handsome youth, full of good sense, yet capable of nonsense, studious and diligent, and yet full to the brim with fun and humour—a youth of fifteen, hailing from the thriving town of Socca—being the foremost scholar of the class, and the admitted spokesman, took it upon himself to answer. He did not think there was any limit to the power of the organs of vision; or, if there was, nothing in nature could demonstrate it.

The professor looked at him wonderingly, and then severely.

"What do you mean, sir, by saying there is no limit to human capacity? But (with a wave of the hand) we will not argue that point. Remembering the rotundity of the earth—the convexity of its surface—and allowing for the elevation at which we stand above the level of the water—say, two hundred and fifty feet—at what distance could we see an object beyond the horizon? Now, observe, what we call the horizon is where, to our vision, the water and the sky seem to meet; so those ships, the lofty sails of which we can just descry, must be beyond what to us, is the horizon. Do you comprehend me?"

Dick nodded assent.

"Then, Master Richard Marble, there we

have an effectual—a limit absolute—to human vision: the intervention of the earth's surface; and yet, as is the case with those ships, we can see objects which are beyond that line of intervention."

"Certainly, sir."

"Ah, and now, how far, think you, might an object be beyond that intervening line, and yet be apparent to our sight?"

"I should say, sir, nature offers no limit."

"Richard, would you trifle with me? While I am trying to impress valuable truths upon your mind, can you find no better use for your—"

At that point Dick stopped the irate pedagogue with a sweep of the hand, at the same time directing his attention to a luminous spot upon the horizon where the moon, only a day past its full, was lifting its silvery face above the bed of waters.

"How far away is that object, my dear Professor?"

"Ah—but—that is—a—"

"No, no," cried Dick, as the tutor stumbled, and the other pupils laughed, "don't beg the question. Give me the benefit of my position. You said nothing of what or where the distant object should be. We were simply discussing the powers of human vision. Where, dear sir, is its limit?"

The professor could enjoy a joke when it came with propriety, and he acknowledged himself vanquished on that occasion. S. C. J.

HOW BOYS MAY SUCCEED IN LIFE.

THE choice of an occupation depends partly upon the individual preference, and partly upon circumstances. It may be that you are debarred from entering upon that business for which you are best adapted. In that case, make the best choice in your power. Apply yourself faithfully and earnestly to whatever you undertake, and you cannot well help achieving a moderate success. Patient application sometimes leads to great results.

You emphasise the fact of your being a poor boy, but this affords no grounds of discouragement. Not only many, but most of our successful business and professional men were trained in the hard school of penury.

So numerous are the cases that it almost seems as if poverty, instead of being a hindrance, were a positive help. Rich boys are often spoiled and their energies sapped and undermined, by luxurious habits, the too free use of money, and the lack of that discipline which comes from indigence.

As an element of success great stress must be laid upon incorruptible integrity, which of late years is unfortunately too rarely found. A business man once said to the writer:

"I can find plenty of smart young men to work for me. What I want is an honest clerk, whom I can implicitly trust."

Scarcely a day passes in which some defalcation is not brought to light. Wide-spread misery often results from the lax principles of some young man placed in a position of trust. Let our young friend resolve that he will live on bread and water rather than appropriate a penny that is not his own. Let him imitate the stern integrity of John Quincy Adams, who would not write a private letter upon Government paper, but provided a separate stock of stationery for such uses. A boy or man who establishes a reputation for strict honesty will not remain out of employment.

Don't give up all your time to business. Reserve a part, if only an hour daily, for reading and mental improvement. If Abbot Lawrence had been familiar only with the details of his business he would never have received the appointment of ambassador, a place which he filled with credit to himself and to his country.

Some men prominent in business have found time also for a wide and varied course of reading, which made them agreeable and instructive companions. Once at a dinner party an eminent

clergyman made an incorrect historical allusion, and was at once set right by a quiet merchant who sat beside him.

Last of all, remember that you owe a debt to humanity. Try to live and labour so that the world may be the richer and mankind the happier for your having lived. A great inventor, a great philanthropist, leaves a legacy to his race. Who can estimate the incalculable debt of the world to the inventor of printing, of the steam engine, of the telegraph? Who will deny that Washington, Franklin and John Howard helped to make the world better than they found it? How long will the memory of Scott, of Dickens, and of Thackeray live in the fund of innocent pleasure which their works are destined to afford for generations to come? All cannot attain their celebrity or emulate their great achievements, but no one is so humble that he cannot promote in some degree the happiness of those around him.

A good mother, when her son was leaving the home of his childhood and going out into the great world, knowing that he was ambitious, gave him this parting injunction:

"My son, remember that though it is a good thing to be a great man, it is a great thing to be a good man."

No sounder or truer words were ever spoken. A great man may dazzle, but a good man is a beacon shining afar, by whose beneficial light a multitude are enabled to walk in safety. The best success is often achieved by the humblest, and an obscure life well spent is better than a wicked renown.

FACETIÆ.

EGYPTIAN LOANS and EGYPTIAN BEANS—Ill-lent and Lent-ill. —Punch.

THE CAB HUNTERS.

(Scene: An archway in the Strand. Time 11.30 p.m. Pouring rain, theatres just over. Benedict, hailing passing cabs with the energy of despair, gives vent to his feelings.)

Hi! Cab, cab, cab! Here, hansom,

I'll gladly give the man some

Coppers who will fetch me here a cab.

'Tis really no use bawling;

Hi! See that fellow crawling

In ill conditioned fashion like a crab.

Down the rain is pouring steadily!

We might have got one readily

If you had come away, ma'am, when I

said.

There! 'Tis no use scolding, Bella,

I did not bring the umbrella,

So please say nothing more upon that

head.

What an ending to an outing!

"Call him?" Well, dear, ain't I shout-

ing?

Here, cab, cab, cab! The stupid fool

won't hear,

And away his horse he's whipping.

Well, ma'am, if you are dripping

I wish you wouldn't drip into my ear.

Like you I know I'm getting

A most infernal wetting;

You look, my dear, like some poor half-

drowned drab.

Now, Bella, you must want sense

To talk such utter nonsense.

"Not trying?" Hi, there! Cab, cab,

cab!

Here's one at last. My gracious,

"Engaged!" 'Tis too vexatious!

'Tis no good being cross, ma'am, so

don't talk;

It's no good your interposing;

See, the houses are now closing.

So, my dear, we'll make the best of it—

and walk. —Judy.

THE History of Five Little Pigs—Their tails.

—Fun.

NICETIES.

TOWN GENTLEMAN (who has got into the wrong compartment): "Is this carriage smoking?"

COUNTRY GENTLEMAN: "No, sir, for sartain she baint."

T. G.: "Then, confound it, why are you smoking in it?"

(But the country gentleman wouldn't tell him, and there was the deuce and all of a row about it till the guard explained that the country gentleman had taken the town gentleman rather too literally.) —Fun.

THE TABLE TURNED.

(Lady Clara Robinson—née Vere de Vere—is subject to fits of Radicalism. After suddenly informing her daughter Gwendoline that kind hearts are more than coronets, and simple faith than Norman blood, she gives her permission to go and play with "those nice daughters of the people.")

GWENDOLINE ROBINSON: "You may play with me, little girls!"

SMALL DAUGHTER OF THE PEOPLE: "If you please, miss, mother don't like us to play with strange children." —Punch.

WHERE IGNORANCE IS BLISS, ETC.

(Flasher, having had his portrait painted for the Academy, asks the opinion of his friend Dabbs, a retired house painter.)

DABBS: "Well, it's like you; but if you've paid thirty guineas for it you've been done. Why, there ain't half a pound of paint on the whole thing!" —Fun.

D. D. D. D.

(The Premier's Policy; or, Sir W. V. H. Improved.)

ABROAD.—Death, Danger, and Disease, Disaster, and Distrust.

At Home.—Disquiet, Deep Distress, Dishonour, and—Disgrace.

—Punch.

WHERE IGNORANCE IS BLISS, ETC.

YEOMANRY OFFICER: "What do you call that, sir? Where did you get it?"

FARMER O'BLEDONE: "A medal, your honour, sure. Our sergeant has three, and, bedad, I don't see why I shouldn't have one. My own sow won it last Cattle Show." —Judy.

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENTS.

"LORENZO." By the author of "The Mate of the Jessica."

"Lemon Ada." By the author of "Orange Lily."

"The Sluggard's Chronometer." By the author of "Lay-an's Instant Reckoner."

"Assault by Surgeons." By the author of "Medical Batteries."

"Chippendale Chairs." By the compiler of "Tables of Interest."

"Rhino." By the authoress of "Rhona."

"Autumn." By the author of "The Master of Red Leaf." —Funny Folks.

ONE FOR HIS NOB.

SWELL (putting down exact money): "There, that will save you any 'intricate' calculations." WAITRESS (indignant): "I don't play 'tricks' with my 'calculations,' sir." —Fun.

A SEA SICKENER.

WHAT is the difference between sea-gulls and a man hailing a hired carriage? The gulls fly over the waves, the man waves over the fly. —Fun.

THE MAN OF AWFUL EXPERIENCE.

LITTLE SWELL: "Waitaw, can you recommend your bitter ale?"

WAITER: "Well, it ain't a beverage that I indulges in, but the 'oldday folks as comes in vans says it's fast-rate." —Judy.

A SEASIDE STUDY.

HE: "Yes, the seaweed I meant was—the clearest, the most beautiful blue grey!"

SHE: "What nonsense you are talking!" (And so he was, only she rather liked it.) —Judy.

THE DANGERS OF DILETTANTISM.

MR. SNIPPE (of "Snippe and Padwell," Pall Mall): "Good afternoon, my lord. I'm proud to see you looking at my humble sketches."

NOBLE CLIENT: "Uiloo, Snippe! You don't mean to say these caricatures are by you?"

MR. SNIPPE: "Yes, indeed, my lord."

NOBLE CLIENT: "By George! Why, they're almost good enough for 'Punch.'"

MR. SNIPPE (modestly): "They ought to be, my lord. I give the whole of my mind to them."

NOBLE CLIENT: "The deuce you do! It's a pity you don't publish them to the world, Snippe."

MR. SNIPPE (much flattered): "I daresay I shall some day, my lord."

NOBLE CLIENT: "Ah, I would, if I were you! And look here, Snippe, when you do I'll buy a set. But I'll be hanged if you shall ever measure me for another coat!" —Punch.

DELICATE FLATTERY.

FARMER JONES: "Well, how do you like that whisky, Mr. O'Brady?"

MR. O'BRADEY: "Shure, now, farmer, and isn't it many a long day since I had the felicity to 'welcome' such a salubrious toothful, bedad?"

—Fun.

THERE'S MANY A TRUE WORD, ETC.

PASSENGER: "Ah, I wonder where all this cheap furniture goes to?"

DRIVER: "H'm! I can tell yer where it goes to."

PASSENGER: "Yes?"

DRIVER: "Well, it just about goes all to pieces." —Fun.

A SAW SAGE.

OLD GRIPPARD, who has reduced his family, in these hard times, to German sausage for breakfast, tries to cheer them with the proverb that "when you come to the wurst, things mend."

—Funny Folks.

"REVENGE IS SWEET!"

PARTY (who had rung the night-bell at 3 a.m.): "Oh, so sorry to disturb you at this hour; but this prescription"—(beseechingly)—"if you'll kindly—it's a matter of life—"

TRADESMAN: "Who are you?"

PARTY: "Oh, I live at No. 4 in the crescent. My name is—"

TRADESMAN (recognising former customer): "Oh—ah—to be sure—I know. Well—you go and knock 'em up at your Co-operative Stores!"

(Shuts window viciously.) —Punch.

ORTHODOX!

THE REV. ALEXIS TONSHER (going round his new parish): "Of course, you observe Lent, Mrs. Rickyard?"

MRS. RICKYARD: "Oh, yes, sir, we allus hev pancakes o' Shrove Tuesday!" —Punch.

G. P. O.

A MUSICIAN writes to complain that, under the new Post Office rules for promoting the public inconvenience, he cannot send MSS. music by post. That is to say, routine fails to distinguish between letters and notes.

—Funny Folks.

A QUAKER'S BLESSING.

On being supplicated by his daughter to countenance the advances of one or other of her two eligible suitors, a member of the Society of Friends so far forgot himself as to exclaim, "Anathema Maranatha!" (Anna, thee may marry norther.) —Fun.

LINKED SWEETNESS.

THE chain of wedlock commences with the wedding ring. —Funny Folks.

THE Patron Saint of Railways—St. Pancrash. —Punch.

THE LANGUAGE OF MUSIC.

(Fair Enthusiast Playing Weber's "Il Moto Continuo"—the time Pestissimo).

CAPTAIN DE SPOONER (who knows nothing

of music): "Thanks, I mayn't understand music, but I can take a hint."

F. E.: "Good gracious, captain, what do you mean?"

C. D. S.: "No offence; but I understand. You are hurrying to get me gone. I will do myself the pleasure of returning when you have time to play it slow." —Funny Folks.

THE Durham colliers are fiercely mustering for mischief, but what will be the good of the heat of the Durham mustered without beef.

—Fun.

OUT OF THE NEST.

THE morning opened fresh and fair;
There was no portent in the air

Blew from the west;
And so we let our little birds—
Our two—with many warning words,
Out of the nest.

Around the roof-tree for awhile
Beneath the mother's anxious smile
The nestlings played;
Till toward the pageant of the
west,

With sunset's golden glories drest,
They, wondering, strayed.

They strayed: we never thought,
alas!

Their feeble flutterings could pass
Beyond our ken!
But ere the sun resigned his crown
The Wizard of the Snow came down
And strewed the glen.

That was a night of wail and woe;
We sought them through the blinding
snow

In vain—in vain!
A hundred bearded men fared forth,
And east, and west, and south, and
north.

They scoured the plain.

And sometimes one would backward
speed,
His strong voice shaking like a reed
Piped in a blast,

And say, "The morning will be
clear;
We'll find your nestlings, never
fear,

When this is past!"

They did! Where still the valley
lay
Untrodden, in the morning grey
A feeble track

They found and followed till—ah,
well,
With tears that unavailing fell,
They brought them back!

And now the nest is bare; but God
Who thus hath lain His chastening
rod

Upon our breast,
He knows, for ever and a day,
We did not think our birds could
stray

Far from the nest! C. D. G.

GEMS.

If you would be exempt from uneasiness, do nothing which you know or suspect is wrong; and if you wish to enjoy the present pleasure, always do everything in your power which you know to be right.

THERE is very little virtue in being good if you have no temptation to be bad. It was Mark Twain who said that he was better than George Washington, because Washington couldn't tell a lie, while he could but wouldn't.

EDUCATION is not a preventive of crime, but its diffusion will certainly help the people to know the advantages of obedience, the policy of honesty, and dangers of doing wrong.

SOME unknown philosopher observes: A little girl who can put on a square patch may not be so accomplished as one who can work a green worsted dog on a yellow ground, but she is of far more value in the community."

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SCOTCH SHORT CAKE.—1. One pound of butter, half pound of sugar, one and three-quarter pounds of flour; knead well together, and roll out in cakes one half inch thick. 2. One pound of flour, half pound butter, one-fourth pound sugar; cream the butter and sugar together and add the flour. Roll it half an inch thick, and bake slowly. If the cake is preferred very sweet use six ounces sugar.

INDIAN LOAF.—Take one pint of sour milk, one half-pint of sweet milk, one teaspoonful of molasses, one-half teaspoonful of butter, two teaspoonfuls of saleratus, one large teaspoonful of salt, three eggs, one pint of wheat flour, one quart of yellow Indian meal; bake in a deep tin basin, in an oven of same heat as for cake, for one and a half hours.

FEITTERS.—One pint of milk, one egg well beaten, flour to make a rather stiff batter; before dropping into the boiling lard, add one teaspoonful of Borwick's baking powder. May be varied by adding sliced apples.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE latest American notion is "a club within a club." It takes the form of arranging social and festive doings in bodies of twenty or thirty, and extends to tours, summer outings, and sporting matters.

A BROOKLYN correspondent writes, in relation to ladies' walking matches:—The mass of blisters on Miss R.'s feet might be photographed to advantage, in order to show the public the real agony that female pedestrians are supposed to undergo.

DR. CARVER, the champion shot of America, who has been astonishing us with his extraordinary rifle practice, caused quite a sensation in the Row a few days ago. A tall man, in boots that looked quite suited to the prairie, with a Californian steed and a Californian saddle, is not to be seen every day in Hyde Park.

THIS is the way in which a girl recently disposed of a young man: "You have asked me pointedly if I can marry you, and I have answered you pointedly that I can. I can marry a man who makes love to a different girl every month. I can marry a man whose main occupation seems to be to join in gauntlet in front of churches and theatres and comment audibly on the people who are compelled to pass through it. I can marry a man whose only means of support is an aged father. I can marry a man who boasts that any girl can be won with the help of a good tailor and an expert tongue. I can marry such a man, but I w—o—n't!"

MR. MACDERMOTT, who made his name and fame by singing the great Jingo song, has again appealed to the sympathy of his audiences by his new song, "True Blue," the words being set to a capital tune; in this patriotic song Britons are recommended to stick to the old ship, "and with a new election near, there may be dirty weather." It is Conservative in feeling, and meets with uproarious applause. Some say that MacDermott is a University man, others that he began life as a common sailor. Anyhow he has again "struck ile." He sings at three halls nightly, four songs at each, and is drawing about £30 a week as salary at each.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

HARRY.—There is no better spring medicine than the old sulphur, cream of tartar, and treacle mixture.

EMILIE.—When a lady and gentleman are out riding or walking it is the lady's place to propose going home.

NO NAME.—I. See answer to "O. J. P." in No. 836. 2. A young lady is of age at twenty-one.

CLERK.—Insert a short advertisement in the "Morning Advertiser," a London paper circulating among publicans.

HARD & HEARTY must understand that unless correspondents enclose full name and address, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith, we cannot take any notice of their communications.

A CONSTANT READER.—Your best and cheapest remedy is to take the child to the workhouse, stating your case; doubtless the authorities will act in the matter.

C. McD.—Your hair "falling off" is either owing to constitutional weakness or neglect. Wash the scalp frequently with cold water and keep the hair short. Occasionally use the following mixture. Olive oil two ounces, tincture of cantharides quarter of an ounce, oil of rosemary thirty drops.

ELAINE.—The servant can claim the month's wages.

MURIEL.—The young man having courted you for two years, and being now in a position to marry, your parent should plainly ask him his intentions, and failing a satisfactory answer, he is liable to an action for breach of promise.

E. M.—Your advertisement appeared in No. 836, at the top of the centre column.

BETTY.—The increase of late of hysteria in females is ascribed by medical men to originate from high-heeled boots.

CARRIE (Wood Street).—Send to Messrs. Davis & Co., sewing-machine manufacturers, for an illustrated price list. They have opened a new city branch near you, 67 and 68, Chesapeake. We know of no cheaper or better firm, quality and price considered.

JESSIE.—There is an old Thuringian custom, a love charm, that would possibly be the subject of the picture. A girl with many lovers tries to discover which of them is to be her future husband. She pulls the petals, one by one, from the flower, and as she drops them in the water names each one after a lover. The last that floats longest, sinking last, represents her future husband.

DOROTHY.—Speaking correctly, there are only four arts—painting, sculpture, music, and architecture. The French Academy admits a fifth, viz., dancing. It seems hard to exclude poetry from the group of the arts, but you will see that though the spirit of it is identical with those we have named, its letter is different.

WILL.—If the settlement on the wife is made bona fide, the husband not being insolvent at the time, the settlement will be good as against any calls that may be made on the bank shares in both cases.

ONE IN DISTRESS.—Tell the chemist you want a prescription made up for the purpose you require it, reminding him to put in the belladonna.

E. A. B.—We should not advise anyone in whom we were interested to go out to New Zealand yet awhile. We may answer you more fully next week.

LAW.—Generally an inventory is made, and someone left in possession. The goods must be sold within a reasonable time. Tools and implements of trade up to the value of £5 are exempt from seizure.

F. C.—The true cause of our so often having unpleasantly cold weather in the first half of May is that when with the return of Spring the ice floes in the Arctic Sea begin to float southward, cold currents of air proceed to us. Perhaps this year, owing to a severe winter, the sea has been frozen farther south, so that the melting has begun earlier than usual.

SISTER.—Your case is a very unfortunate one and is deserving of pity. You should be as kind and considerate towards your grandmother as possible. Your brother ought to be handed over to the authorities when he treats you and your grandmother with brutality. Show him this answer and he may perhaps mend his manners towards you.

T. G.—If you did not know the young man you should not have accepted his offer unless you felt incompetent to drive home yourself. It was forward in him to ask permission to call, especially if he was a stranger to you.

M. E. K., nineteen, a domestic, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty, good-looking.

WALTER and TOM, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Walter is dark, good-looking. Tom is twenty-one, fond of music, and of a loving disposition.

BRANCH PIPE, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen. He is fair, fond of children.

ROSE and GERTRUDE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Rose is eighteen, fair hair and eyes, medium height, fond of home and children. Gertrude is eighteen, fond of home, medium height.

SHIR'S CHIEF OFFICER, a seaman in the Royal Navy, thirty-one, would like to correspond with a young widow with a view to matrimony. Must be dark, and medium height.

C. B. and F. L., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. C. B. is twenty-one, good-tempered, dark brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. F. L. is twenty-one, tall, dark brown hair and eyes, fond of home, loving. Respondents must be about the same age.

LILLIE and NELLIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Lillie is eighteen, brown hair and eyes, fond of home and children. Nellie is eighteen, dark, thoroughly domesticated.

CUTTER, JOLLY BOAT, and GALLEY, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies. Cutter is tall, handsome, dark hair and eyes, fond of children. Jolly Boat is of a loving disposition, fond of home. Galley is good-looking, loving, fond of dancing.

ECCO HOMO and SEMPER FIDELIS, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Ecco Homo is twenty, tall, fair, good-looking. Semper Fidelis is twenty, medium height, fair, fond of home. Respondents must be about nineteen.

WOUNDED.

'Tis easier to bear
The heaviest weight of care,
The shock of battle, and the prisoner's fare,
Than to endure the pain
Of bitter words, that gain
An entrance to the heart, and there remain.

'Tis such an easy thing
A bitter taunt to fling,
We often smile when others feel the sting;
But how the blood is stirred
By an ungracious word
From one above all other friends preferred!

The castle may not fall,
Nor enemies appal,
If there are loyal watchmen on the wall;
But open the doors to sin,
And troubles soon begin,
A single traitor letting thousands in.

'Tis easier to heal
The suffering we feel
From bullet wound, or thrust of glittering steel,
Than to remove the dart,
The agonising smart,
An unkind word may give a loving heart.

'Tis easier to die,
And bid the world good-bye,
When youth, and health, and happiness beat high,
Than to live on, and brood
In weary solitude,
Misrepresented and misunderstood. J. P.

LONELY, thirty, a widow, would like to correspond with a gentleman about forty with a view to matrimony. She is thoroughly domesticated, of a loving disposition, and fond of children.

MAESTRO, thirty-five, dark, professor of music, and a member of the Church of England, would like to correspond with a young lady about ten years younger, pretty, and also a member of the same church as himself.

ANNIE and LIZIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Annie is of medium height, dark hair, blue eyes. Lizzie is tall, light hair, black eyes. Respondents must be about eighteen.

FRANK, twenty-four, dark hair and eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady about his own age, of a loving disposition, and fond of music and dancing.

LONELY HELEN, nineteen, medium height, fair, brown hair, light eyes, wishes to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony. She is loving, fond of home and children.

NELLIE, eighteen, loving, brown hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony.

BURTON, eighteen, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, and fair, would like to correspond with a pretty, well-educated young lady.

MARY and LIZIE, two friends, wish to correspond with two young men. Mary is nineteen, dark, light hair, of medium height, loving. Lizzie is eighteen, good-tempered, of a loving disposition.

CAREY M., twenty-three, Auburn hair, grey eyes, good-looking, fond of home, and of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about the same age.

CLARICE, twenty-one, light hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young man about the same age, dark, good-looking.

D. C., twenty, dark, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age, fond of home.

TALKING JACK, a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty, medium height, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age, fair, and fond of home and children.

R. D., twenty, dark, of a loving disposition, domesticated, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-two, good-tempered.

FRANK W., twenty-one, curly hair, would like to correspond with a young lady. Respondent must be eighteen, good-looking.

LILLIAN M. would like to correspond with a young man about twenty with a view to matrimony. She is twenty, fair, domesticated, medium height.

A. G., eighteen, thoroughly domesticated, tall, dark, light hair, hazel eyes, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-one, of a loving disposition.

D. B., eighteen, brown hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady. Respondents must be about seventeen, domesticated, brown hair, blue eyes, dark.

TILLY and NETTIE, two friends, wish to correspond with two young gentlemen. Tilly is twenty, tall, fond of home and children. Nettie is nineteen, of a loving disposition.

R. H., twenty, dark, of a loving disposition, domesticated, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-two with a view to matrimony.

ALICE, eighteen, medium height, dark brown hair, and hazel eyes, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-one, in a good position.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

LONELY BETTY is responded to by—James, twenty-seven, tall, dark.

D. R. by—E. A. C., eighteen, dark brown hair, blue eyes, domesticated.

HAPPY TOM by—M. S.

JOLLY JACK by—C. B.

GEORGE M. by—S. M., thirty-five, fair, a widow.

HERBERT W. by—Nanny W., eighteen, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, fair.

SAULON'S DARLING by—Lonely Jack, dark hair, hazel eyes, fond of home.

ALBERT by—Ella S., medium height, curly hair, dark, good-tempered.

G. M. by—Marian P., tall, fair, loving.

M. N. by—Minnie, eighteen.

G. A. by—Nellie, seventeen.

ALBERT by—F. M., medium height, blue eyes, fond of home and children.

ROBERT W. by—A. H., good-looking, of a loving disposition.

P. T. by—A. S., fond of home and children, medium height.

J. W. by—Buffo, twenty-two, fond of home.

G. K. by—Camilla, nineteen, brown hair, grey eyes, affectionate.

F. M. by—Passion Flower, twenty, dark hair and eyes, good figure.

LOUISA by—Samuel L., twenty-one, dark curly hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

L. W. by—Thomas W., twenty-one.

LEONARD by—Millie, twenty, of medium height, and dark.

THEOPHILUS by—May, twenty, fair.

GEORGINA by—William MoQ.

L. D. by—E. W. O.

W. N. by—Beatrice, brown hair, hazel eyes, fair, and loving.

R. A. by—Connie, dark, loving.

G. M. by—H. S., thirty, tall, dark, domesticated, fond of children.

TELESCOPE by—Jessie Maud, twenty-eight, grey eyes, dark, fond of music.

LEONARD by—Alice, brown eyes, fair, tall.

FREDERICK by—Zillah, medium height, fair, tall.

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